

RICE UNIVERSITY

**Communities of Place:
Making Regions in the Victorian Novel**

by

Heather Miner

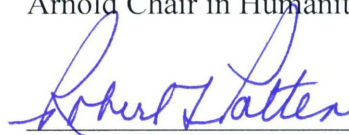
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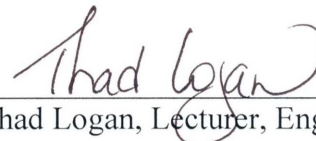
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ABSTRACT

Communities of Place: Making Regions in the Victorian Novel

Heather Miner

Mid-way through George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, the heroine of the novel develops a plan to move from her country estate in England's Midlands to the northern industrial county of Yorkshire, where she intends to found a model factory town. Dorothea Brooke's utopian fantasy of class relations, ultimately abandoned, hints at the broader regional and geospatial discourse at work in this canonical Victorian novel, but is equally ignored by critics and by other characters in Eliot's realist masterpiece. In *Communities of Place*, I explore a new current of scholarship in Victorian studies by examining the role that England's historic and geographic regions played in the development of the novel.

Scholars of British literature and history have long argued that Victorian national and cultural identity was largely forged and promulgated from England's urban centers. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the center became synonymous with London and, in the national metropolitan imagination, counties outside of London seemingly became homogenized into peripheral, anti-modern spaces. The critical tradition reinforces this historical narrative by arguing that the rise of nationalism precludes the development of regionalism. Thus, theorists of British nationalism have glossed over

England's intranational identity and have directed attention beyond England's borders, toward France or Scotland, to analyze national identity within Great Britain as a whole. Scholars of intra-English culture, meanwhile, have often narrowly focused on county histories and the working classes in isolation. Both types of studies effectively argued that the English middle class, and the middle-class Victorian novel, lack regional affiliation; as Raymond Williams argues, middle-class Victorians were "external" to regional life.

With *Communities of Place*, I join a scholarly conversation that offers an alternative to these scholarly cul-de-sacs: a critically engaged and historically responsive account of English regionalism. My project demonstrates how the development of distinctive English regional cultures paralleled, and occasionally destabilized, the formation of English national identity in the Victorian period. Central to this project is my assertion that the English upper and middle classes, like the working classes, were in part defined by their regional affiliations.

Communities of Place, then, offers a historically specific understanding of regionalism as an important structuring framework for the social, geographic, and environmental relations in post-Romantic English literature by drawing attention to four formulations of English regionalism: the early-Victorian defenses of industrial Northern Englishness, mid-Victorian regional conceptions of mixed rural and factory spaces, the repurposing of non-industrial landscapes for leisure, and the late-century return to the materiality of countryside, now emptied of Romantic naturalism. In each chapter I study one geographically-specific cultural region, from Elizabeth Gaskell's industrial Lancashire to Thomas Hardy's rural Wessex, in order to explore more generally how

local class relations, topography, and recreational activities helped to shape discrete notions of Englishness outside of London. This methodology offers a productive alternative to center/peripheral models for understanding relations within England. By focusing on the depiction of regional responses to topics of national discussion, ranging from industrialism to the rise of consumer culture, I show how these issues were negotiated by the middle classes Victorian literature. These responses influence contemporary discussions about regional authority over landscape policy, the cultural status of the vernacular, and the preservation of green spaces in the urban nation. I argue that scholars can find the history of these concerns not only within the physical grounds of regional landscapes but also in the literary texts that helped to produce such places.

Acknowledgments

It seems particularly fitting to me that my graduate studies should culminate in a dissertation on regional relationships and communities. As I have travelled from Charlottesville to Houston and from Eugene to Liverpool for my education and for this project, I have been incredibly fortunate to have the support and feedback from a far-flung group of faculty members and friends. Helena Michie and Robert L. Patten, co-chairs of this project, have been unfailingly generous with their advice, commentary, and encouragement. Their guidance and meticulous reading have been enormously helpful to my development not only as a scholar, but also as a teacher and colleague. This project emerged from a course taught by Thad Logan, who has been a kind interlocutor and detailed reader of my work throughout my time at Rice. I would also like to thank Martin Wiener, Lynn Voskuil, Steve Arata, and Karen Chase, all of whom have been tremendously generous with their time and interest. Additionally, I am grateful to the Dickens Universe, the Attingham Trust, and the English Department at Rice for intellectual and financial support.

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It would require a companion volume to this dissertation for me to have the space to fully express my gratitude to my family. Having a sister, Jennifer Miner Weaver, who understands and appreciates the highs and lows of graduate school, has been a gift; having a brother-in-law, David Weaver, who understands this, too, has been a double blessing. Thank goodness for Jack Weaver, who knows nothing about academics (yet).

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Barbara Williams Miner and John Burnham Miner. My father's commitment to his work, his family, and to children's education, has been an inspiration both professionally and personally. My mother, whose support, patience, and encouragement have been constant, continues to be the sort of person I want to be when I grow up. My family has shown me that the community that matters the most is the one where they are.

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INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITIES OF PLACE: MAKING REGIONS IN THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

In 1983 Raymond Williams published a short chapter on “Region and Class in the Novel” in *Writing in Society*. The majority of the book explores the historical and cultural sources of particular aspects of writing—such as Shakespearean dialogue and Dickensian characterization—but this chapter is different. Rather than concentrating on the stuff of literature, Williams’s focus in this essay is on what is missing: a long tradition of regional writing in England. Williams argues that the label “regional novel” is applicable mainly to certain novels written at the end of the nineteenth century and more fully to writing in the post-World War I era. He claims that regional novels are distinctive in certain ways: they are confined to certain regions with recognized local characters; they tell us solely or primarily about life in the region; and they are “about” or “set in” a specific, working-class community (Williams 229). Though many Victorian novels and most realist literature share these characteristics, for Williams, nineteenth-century bourgeois authors used the regional setting not to explore individuals but types. Regional novels before the twentieth century, according to Williams, then, reductively limited their representation of the region to narrating relationships in them rather than the reality of life in these spaces, and therefore could not develop fully as a genre until the novel had been decoupled from middle-class authorship. If regionalism can only be expressed by working-class authors living in the region and by authors who confined their writing to an almost

anthropological fictionalization of the region, it follows that this genre could not develop until literacy rates increased at the end of the nineteenth century.

Williams's essay seems to mark a point of agreement on the subject of English regionalism among literary critics. While work in the tradition of Williams has demonstrated the extent to which the English landscape is an artificial construction of literary and visual culture and has identified a gap between the social reality of the English countryside's aesthetic and nationalist purpose,¹ considerably less critical attention has been paid to revising his account of English regionalism. His argument emerged from a critical tradition that maintained that middle-class Victorians, and the Victorian novel, were "external" to regional life and had long dismissed regional writing (Williams 233).² Prior to Williams, Henry Auster had noted that "Regionalism in English fiction . . . when regarded at all, is normally regarded as something of a curiosity, and a curiosity with no significance. Enduring literature, it is said, is universal: only second-rate writers are regional" (Auster 14-15). The views he describes were earlier voiced by Q. D. Leavis, who held that "painstaking application of rural local colour" is not the stuff of "esteemed" literature (Leavis 440).³ More recent critics of English regionalism, such as Ian A. Bell, John Plotz, and W. J. Keith, have avoided Leavis's rhetoric of aesthetic

¹ See, for example, Gerard MacLean, Donna Landry and Joseph P. Ward's edited collection, *The Country and the City Revisited: England and the Politics of Culture, 1550-1820*.

² Roberto Dainotto argues that the alignment of Marxism and regionalism, is "untenable" because place-based identity "work[s] against the interests of class" (25). For an extended discussion, see especially Dainotto's introduction, "The Literature of Place and Region."

³ Q. D. Leavis suggested that regional novels lack both authority and taste: "We register a suspicion that the esteemed regional novel is some commonplace work of fiction made interesting to the Boots Library public by a painstaking application of rural colour" (440).

value but have similarly defined regionalism in literary scholarship as a genre concerned with the rural, the working class, the local—and not with the mainstream Victorian novels.⁴

Communities of Place departs from this scholarship by exploring English regionalism, literary and cultural, in the Victorian era. The central argument of this study is that middle and upper classes, in addition to the working classes, were in part defined by their regional communities. Following from this claim, this project attends to the tensions inherent in defining place-identity during a time of unprecedented urban growth and change. I argue that efforts to ground middle-class English identity in a stable referent, an identifiable region of England, were extended to the landscape, the built environment, and the literature in the Victorian period. Victorian novels written in Manchester, the Midlands, and the West Country emerged as particularly effective vehicles with which to “fix” English identity in a particular region. I turn to architectural sites—such as the Manchester Town Hall—and landscapes—such as fox-hunting fields in Barsetshire—because these environments frequently signify for the middle classes

⁴ Critical definitions of the regional novel vary, but these traits are commonly cited by a range of scholars throughout the twentieth century. In 1939 F. W. Morgan stressed the regional novel’s “absorption in a particular locality: absorption and not merely interest. . . The area, too, must not be too small,” and, he continued, “the true regional novel has people at work as an essential material: it has become almost the epic of the Labourer;” the regional novel “produces a synthesis, a living picture of the unity of place and Labourer;” the regional novel “produces a synthesis, a living picture of the unity to place and Transferable” (84-6). Lucien Leclaire divided British regional fiction in three chronological categories, which share a common attraction to tradition: “To French, German, American, or other people, I believe a sense of strangeness is considered as affording one typical aspect of the British community. While to the Briton, it affords a kind of introspective interest—he still looks at himself, a more or less well-known self—or at least at his brother. And if blood is thicker than water, he cannot but feel some fascination at the image presented to him, an image which is the more interesting as it showed more marked differences or unsuspected points; or, on the contrary, as it brings back to his mind, the memory of times past surrounded by a halo of idealized remembrance” (Leclaire 12).

what dialect does for the working class: regional connection. My project is both a survey of real and imagined environments—regional architectural sites and cityscapes that represent place-specific responses to local and national concerns—and an account of the process by which literary texts and regional caretakers participated in the production and preservation of English regions as sites of tradition. By focusing on the depiction of local responses to topics of national discussion, ranging from industrialism to the rise of recreation culture, I show how conversations were negotiated by regional communities in Victorian literature. These responses influenced discussions about regional authority over English environments, the cultural status of the vernacular, and the preservation of green spaces in the urban nation. I argue that scholars can find the history of these concerns not only within the physical grounds of regional landscapes but also in the literary texts that helped to produce such places. To theorize and historicize this process, as well as to situate my study of regionalism within a literary context, I borrow across the field of national, regional, and spatial studies.

In this dissertation the focus on intertwined literary and spatial practices brings to the fore a historical group not often associated with regionalism: the middle class. Victorian middle-class communities were not sealed off from the economic and social influences of the nation itself, nor from the international scene and its more indirect forces. Studying any county in isolation, without reference to its local, national, or international context, would be an inadequate history, and this is a main argument for a study of regional and inter-regional communities that highlights a social class—the

middle class—actively being shaped by, and responding to, modernity.⁵ The middle class is at the center of a larger network of relationships studied in this project’s four formulations of English regionalism. Beginning with urban early-Victorian Manchester and ending in rural late-Victorian Dorset, I move from studying a middle-class community asserting progressive and hegemonic identity to a middle-class community committed to preserving England’s aristocratic heritage: the project ends, perhaps ironically, with a middle-class community more traditional than that from the 1840s. What brings these communities into conversation with each other are their material investments in the landscape, which, in addition to their cultural affiliations, played a crucial role in the construction of territorial loyalties, both in shaping the actual physical experience of regional communities and in representing regional communities to local and national audiences. This dissertation offers a historically specific understanding of Victorian bourgeois regionalism as an important structuring framework for social, geographic, and environmental relations in the nineteenth century.

I find the term “region” useful because it has a flexible historical and spatial meaning. The definition I use in this project is intentionally vague, but includes authors who, in most critical accounts, would fall outside or on the boundaries of regional fiction: Victorian regional fiction is a genre that is set in a recognizable English region and which describes the social relations and culture of the working class, middle class and gentry.

⁵ The Victoria History of the Counties of England series, which aims to create an encyclopedic history of each of the historic counties of England, is a key example of scholarship that devotes a single volume to a single county; the series, first begun in 1899, now includes over 230 volumes. Modern work in this tradition is vibrant; see, for example, literary studies such as Simon Trezise’s *The West Country as a Literary Invention: Putting Fiction In Its Place* and historical work such as Dave Russell’s *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination*.

For the purposes of this study, I define Victorian regional fiction as that which is primarily concerned with local landowners, architects, writers, and environmental planners detailing the character and environment of their regional community, and their connection to the values and landscape of that community. A Victorian regional novel gestures toward an approximation to a real place, but is also in dialogue with the imaginative construction of that place—so, as we shall see, when Thomas Hardy creates Wessex, Dorset becomes Wessex. Regionalism is not equivalent to nationalism or provincialism, but it does not exclude these terms. “Regional,” then, describes more than geographic or social senses of spaces: it also implies my conscious choice to consider the novels I focus on without political or aesthetic judgments; the word has the advantage of eliding the culturally derogative connotations associated with the term “provincial.”⁶ The definition I give purposely contradicts traditional definitions of regionalism so that a certain set of bourgeois values and practices connected to regionalism can be illuminated.

The term “communities of place” anchors this form of regionalist study to literary production. Communities of place are human-scaled and constructed places that mix different classes of people and activities closely together and provide spaces for them to

⁶ I discuss the difference between regional and provincial fiction more fully in the second and third chapters of this project, but, for now, Ian Duncan’s discussion of the regional and the provincial novel provides an important literary-historical means by which to distinguish between these two types of Victorian settings. “Regional fiction,” Duncan writes, “specifies its setting by invoking a combination of geographical, natural-historical, antiquarian, ethnographic, and/or sociological features that differentiates it from any other region.” Related but distinct is the provincial novel, which “is defined more simply by its difference from the metropolis...a negative difference, based on a binary opposition, expressed as a generic of typical identity, within which any particular provincial setting may take the place of any other.” Regional settings are often locatable on a map, but far from the reader’s own experience of place (such as the settings of novels by Maria Edgeworth, Walter Scott, or the Brontës). Regional fiction, to Duncan, privileges difference over consensus; it thus capitalizes not on readers’ ability to locate themselves within a text’s setting but rather on the curiosity that will arise when they cannot do so. J. Hillis Miller’s *Topographies* also examines the relationship between form and setting and discusses the function of place names and geographies in literary writing ranging from Thomas Hardy and Tennyson to Faulkner and Heidegger.

interact. They are everyday places where random casual meetings and events occur, and in which a sense of community is fostered. These spaces uniquely shape a social geography intimately known only by those who live or work there. They are difficult to design but relatively simple to obliterate.⁷ More than anything, they are central to the phenomenological and social health of the local and regional community. This project brings certain representative communities of place to the fore—civic buildings in Manchester, National Trust properties in Wessex—to explore how their public care and treatment helps to define discrete English regions. The region provides the overarching geopolitical framework for this project, but the idea of communities of place is the basis on which regional affiliations are built. The daily lives of the novels I study operate simultaneously on multiple scales, and social interaction and representation of communities of place have an important reciprocal relation to the overall identity of the

⁷ A scene from Dickens's *Dombey and Son* exemplifies this truism. In the novel, Stagg's Garden is wiped off the map of London because of the growth of the railroad. The arrival of the railroad "rent the whole neighborhood to its center," Dickens writes (63). Dickens describes knocked down houses, "streets broken through and stopped," destroyed buildings, a "chaos of carts" spilling into the streets. "Everywhere were bridges that led nowhere," and "carcasses of ragged tenements," Dickens writes. What was once a knowable space turns into "a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the air, moldering in the water, and unintelligible as any dream" (63).

region.⁸ The process by which a site is produced by a community and by the experience of it is one of the primary concerns of this dissertation.⁹

My turn to English regions, as places of significant experience and concern in Victorian literature, is prompted by an interest in offering an alternative perspective not only on class in regionalist studies, then, but also by an interest in illuminating English places and practices historically elided in Victorian studies. Scholars of British literature and history have long argued that Victorian national and cultural identity was largely forged and promulgated from England's urban center. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the center became synonymous with London and, in the national metropolitan imagination, counties outside of London seemingly became homogenized into peripheral, anti-modern spaces. London metaphorically represents the apex of British culture, so it is understandable that Victorianists have focused an imposing amount of critical energy on detailing general and minute aspect of life in Victorian London. London is a "primate" city: as social geographers note, London is not only the nation's capital and the hub of political power, but it is also at the center of the nation's intellectual and cultural life (Johnston 580).

⁸ The phrase "communities of place" has been adopted in a range of theoretical and social approaches to environmental and urban planning, as well as a descriptive historical category. See, for example, the discussion of "communities of place" and urban planning in Calthorpe and Fulton, pp. 31-38. In *Sustainability and Communities of Place*, Carl A. Maida suggests, as do I, a discussion of communities of place is particularly apt to discussion of regionalism: "regional culture provides not only a diversity of practices for its citizens to experience but also local perspectives to shape their personal identities. These experiences engender a collective identity and ecology of public symbols that help a community to define place-centered ethical and aesthetic norms" (Maida 3).

⁹ "Communities of place" should not be confused with "communities of interest." As Tyler Norris writes, "Communities of interest draw together people who share a common faith, a common political or social perspective, profession and so on" (Norris 587). A community of interest is much larger yet physically less connected to the physical environment and local community than the community of place.

The critical tradition reinforces this historical narrative by using a center/periphery model of British nationalism to argue that the rise of British nationalism precludes the development of English regionalism. Thus, theorists of British nationalism have glossed over England's intranational identity and have directed attention beyond England's borders, to France or Scotland, to analyze national identity within Great Britain as a whole. The literature on nationalism is extensive, but historian Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging a Nation, 1710–1800* offers perhaps the most compelling genealogy of the center/periphery model nationalism to date, particularly to literary scholars interested in the discursive construction of national identities. Colley focuses on Britishness because her study addresses the ways in which hostility towards a foreign, dissimilar, and Catholic enemy "proved to be the essential cement" between Britons in the years between the 1707 Act of Union (joining Scotland to England and Wales) and the beginning of Victoria's reign. Heavily indebted to Benedict Anderson, Colley uses a wide array of literary and visual sources to argue that Britishness was a consciously crafted identity that grew, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, out of wars against America and Spain, and a much longer war against revolutionary France. These decades of united struggle evidence how men and women became members of an active and self-consciously British community. Linda Colley revises Benedict Anderson's arguments about "an imagined political community" by arguing that Britain was an "invented nation" that was relatively new and could disintegrate just as rapidly as it was formed.

Colley's work has long been taken up by literary scholars, chief among them Kate Trumpener, whose influential work *Bardic Nationalism* argued against the hegemonic focus on England in Colley's work. Trumpener turned the critical gaze to the creation of

nationalism in the so-called “Celtic fringe,” arguing that in the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries a wide range of cultural critics (including authors, folklorists, travel writers, agricultural reformers, and others) responded to the Anglicization attempts being made by the English in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland by dynamically shaping a national and historical consciousness within their own borders. Along with Tom Nairn, Trumpener argues that nationalism proper did not develop in England. More recently, Amanda Claybough has continued these geographical interpretations by extending debates on social reform in England and America to the development of Anglo-American national literatures. In all, these distinct analyses of Britishness are important texts in understanding the discursive and historical relationship between metropolitan England, the nations within the Union of Great Britain, and the complicated stance as England developed into the British Empire.¹⁰

My turn to regionalism is an attempt to look, together, at a set of geographical communities of place and concerns that are often separated from one another. As my concentration on the urban region of Manchester in this project’s first chapter shows, I do not equate “region” with “rural.” The urban regional novel is, I demonstrate, a crucially important part of regional fiction writing during the nineteenth century. Urban regions are ecologically, socially, and economically diverse; my discussion of Manchester’s unique place at the crossroad of international trade and domestic politics illustrates the extent to

¹⁰ Philip Dodd, by contrast to Colley, offers an interesting examination of British rather than English national identity by positing that Englishness was consolidated in the wake of the reformed Oxbridge culture of the 1860s. Predicated upon essentialized differences between an English core and its Celtic peripheries, this version of Englishness offered subordinated groups within the United Kingdom a unique place within the national culture in exchange for quiescence.

which a regional perspective can transcend its own boundaries. At the same time, understanding rural regionalism is an important aspect of this study—not as isolated pockets of pastoral Englishness, but as consciously changing and modernizing environments within the urbanizing state. Whether looking at urban or rural regions, this dissertation is not a history that focuses on the small and the specific. County histories and isolated regional studies, ranging from the work of literary scholars interested in author-based criticism, local amateur historians, anthropologists, and tourist guides, frequently focus myopically on the deep history of one space to the detriment of understanding the role a particular region plays in widespread cultural debates and the importance of local events to national histories. In this project, regionalism provides a platform to study a range of environments that fall below the national but above the local.

While this project draws on, and departs from, previous regional studies, my dissertation is equally informed by fresh literary-historical accounts of regionalism. The essays in *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland, 1800–1990*, edited by the historian Keith D. Snell, mark an important interdisciplinary development in the study of English literary regionalism. The book draws attention to the extent and variety of regional fiction in English, from Maria Edgeworth’s Irish fiction to Alan Sillitoe’s Nottingham novels. The collection traces the incidence of geographical and sociological data in a selection of familiar nineteenth-century regional authors (Maria Edgeworth, Walter Scott)¹¹ and some unfamiliar twentieth-century authors, such as Alan Sillitoe and Emyr

¹¹ As Liz Bellamy shows, Romantic culture defined regional fiction as a genre interested in the vanishing indigenous rural cultures and uncultivated landscapes of the constituent parts of Great Britain, associations that were epitomized in the novels of Walter Scott. Scott’s influence over critical definitions of nineteenth century regional literature has been another central tenant of the dissociation of the topic from Victorian

Humphreys. Snell's use of historical as well as geographical specificity to distinguish the region from the province in Victorian representations is helpful. While one province can stand for any other, in a more or less abstract distance from the metropolis, he suggests that each region comprises a discrete chronotope. Snell, however, argues that the growth of the genres is pegged to the Napoleonic War in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the World Wars in the twentieth: interest in supporting and writing about local culture increases when Britain is threatened from without. Moreover, Snell suggests that the regional novel could only develop when the hold of the gentry and close tie of a family to the history of a place was loosened. In Snell's account, regionalism has a deep literary history but, again, a limited social definition and meaning in the nineteenth century (Snell 1-32).

My approach borrows from across these methodologies but, in particular, from spatial studies. Studying middle-class English regionalism in an architectural and environmental context emphasizes how literary and regional spatial practices are intimately connected. For example, I argue that following the pedestrian routes traveled in mid-century Mancunian novels is a form of reading practice that helps us to see how authors spatialized a text and how immersive reading can be a form of grounding a reader in place.¹² Victorian subjects experienced an increasingly expanding world of spatial

studies: Romantic-era novels illustrate regional resistance to hegemonic culture as historical but romantic failures, while mid-Victorian bourgeois novels, which John Plotz, in "The Semi-Detached Provincial Novel," argues are set "in a trivial nowhere and a conceptual everywhere," work to reinforce social totality and convey confidence in national and imperial culture (Bellamy, 54-77; Plotz 405).

¹² In Marie-Laure Ryan's *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media*, Ryan defines immersive reading as "the experience through which a fictional world acquires the presence of an autonomous, language-independent reality populated with live human being"

relations through travel, engagements with and in the British colonies, urbanization, visual culture, or a trip to the Great Exhibition. As James Buzard notes, increasingly during the Victorian period “anywhere was nowhere,” as “the increasing physical and social mobility of Britons themselves, enabled by the harnessing of steam, threatened stable phenomenologies of spatial relation” (Buzard 56). During the Victorian period, places were ripped apart and remade with remarkable speed. Reading and producing regional fiction, I suggest, was a means by which to find oneself in place, to experience not only the multiple temporalities that scholars have long associated with the historical novel, but also a palimpsestic form of spatiality: while reading in this immersive way, one moves in and out of the world of a text and the scene of its consumption—the reader is fixed and “everywhere” all at once. Reading regional fictions and experiencing their spatial practices is a means of being anchored in specific places—real and imaginary.

Therefore, I read Victorian regions as places inscribed with meaning, sites that merit attention, and that, as Edward Casey writes, “introduce spatial order into the world” (Casey 3). Yi-fu Tuan distinguishes between space and place by way of experience: a place must be experienced, or “lived in” however indirectly, while space exists in the realm of the abstract (“Place” 165). A place can thus be a suburban home, an institution, a city, a landscape, a region or nation itself. The spatial has a privileged role in the production of identity; in its endurance and its temporality, place gathers and guards identity not only through the trappings of the present that actively constructs and engage

(14). By “immersive reading” I mean the kind of absorptive reading made possible by certain nineteenth-century technologies and cultural shifts that made reading a novel over an extended period of time possible: transportable texts, adequate lighting, and leisure time for reading. See Leah Price, “Readers Block”; Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming the Book*; and John Plotz, *Portable Property*.

with the material present but with the past that make history “palpably and visibly present” (Samuel 175).¹³ Places perform a kind of spatialization of time that makes certain landscapes and environments a prominent means by which to hold onto and form identity.

The context for my discussion of regionalism and the spatialization of meaning would be incomplete without reference to the material texts that explicitly illustrate these connections: maps. From implied maps of Manchester in Lancastrian novels to explicit maps made by Trollope of Barsetshire to extra-fictional maps made by readers to follow routes through Wessex, this dissertation frequently references social and physical geography. Franco Moretti’s *Atlas of the European Novel* is an early and influential example of how the spatial turn affected literary studies such as this dissertation.¹⁴

¹³ Raphael Samuel’s term “mnemonic landscape” is key to my discussion here and elsewhere in the project. His term refers to sites where place memory is deliberately cultivated and preserved. Samuel describes a mnemonic landscape, or what Samuel also calls “memory places,” are sites where space and time are coeval and collude to allow for an experience of immediacy (Samuel 175). For Samuel, this spatial experience is often the result of collective forms of keeping and preserving the landscapes of the past—through living history and heritage in particular. As Samuel notes, however, the history of mnemonic landscapes extends back well before the advent of heritage tourism (as we shall see, itself a Victorian phenomenon); we might think of Wordsworth’s “spots of time,” for example, to find in literary history a keen awareness not only of the presence of the past in the landscape but also a privileging of the literary as a means by which to access it.

¹⁴ The phrase “the spatial turn” has become commonplace in critical social theory, as the 2008 Routledge essay collection, *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, well shows. In the introduction, the collection’s editors, Barney Warf and Santa Arias, define this critical turn: “Recent works in the fields of literary and cultural studies, sociology, political science, anthropology, history, and art history have become increasingly spatial in the orientation. From various perspectives, they assert that space is a social construction relevant to the understanding of the different histories of human subjects and to the production of the cultural phenomena. In some ways, this transformation is expressed in simple semantic terms, i.e., the literal and metaphorical use and assumptions of ‘space,’ ‘place,’ and ‘mapping’ to denote a geographic dimension as an essential aspect of the production of culture. In other ways, however, the spatial turn is much more substantive, involving a reworking of the very notion and significance of spatiality to offer a perspective in which space is every bit as important as time in the unfolding of human affairs, a view in which geography is not related to an afterthought of social relations, but is intimately bound up in their construction” (Warf and Arias 1).

Moretti uses literary descriptions of setting to draw topographical maps of the novel's locations. Moretti's maps call attention to the ways in which authors managed and remade (or "invented") the geographical scope and relations between places in their novels. For Moretti, maps are "analytic tools" (Moretti 3). He writes, "maps don't interest me because they can be 'read' more or less like a novel, but because they change the way we read novels" (Moretti 5). For example, for Moretti, mapping Dickens's London reveals the extent to which the author inserted a "third London" to hold the two extremes of the East and West End together through the mediation of a middle-class zone in between (Moretti 117). Moretti's work remains crucial because it calls attention to how thinking about a text's spatial relations—indeed, mapping it—is a way to see it anew. Moretti's work negotiates the overlaps between "real" and fictional or imaginary spaces to locate fictional topographies within the European geographies they (unevenly) reflect and shape. It is precisely these overlaps between "real" and fictional maps and locations that inform my reading of regional tourism in the latter half of this project. Moretti's work represent models of the way in which spatial studies can illuminate both the historical particulars of place or geography and the imaginative experience of that place.

My project thus moves in and out of fictional, imaginative and real regions. This dissertation historicizes and emplaces Victorian bourgeois spatial practice to help us see how the Victorian regional novel is a geographically-aware genre concerned with the contemporary moment and attentive to local and national politics. The novels I look at show the extent to which historical milestone events in Victorian regional history contributed to the development of a consciously English internal-national identity. Not all regions are equal in this historical trajectory but, I argue, the emphatic role particular

regions played in national public consciousness provided a public stage for the discussion of issues important to regions whose identity and troubles had less public demonstrations. This project, then, explores the historical contexts that encouraged the rise of particular regions to national status. At the same time, I want to suggest that regional environments, which moved in and out of the worlds of the imaginative and the literal, could work as the ultimate reality effects, signifying what Roland Barthes calls the “*having-been-there*” by virtue of allowing the reader to be there imaginatively (or, through tourism, literally) herself (Barthes 144). Bringing the literary and the spatial together was a particularly effective way regional authors producing and imagined their regional locations and identities. It was also a means by which readers, in the region or without, could verify literature’s participation in their world—perhaps, from the landmarks of a distant city to the suburban corners of their own Dorsetshire neighborhood.

ARCHIVE AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

The Victorian period provides a crucial opportunity for an interdisciplinary study of literature and regional environments. My interest in tracing the development of public environments leads to my primary use of texts written for circulation and texts intended for use. Topographical texts, building pattern books, literary and topographical maps, landscape studies, and novels all appear in this project. In my chapters I move not only across the topography of England but also across the genres of Victorian literary production to connect textual examples and literary forms to the historical contexts of

nineteenth-century England. Although the realist novel is the genre that scholars most often associate with the kind of place-based work and historical preservation that this dissertation seeks to track, I argue that concerns about the role of the literary as a means by which to make and preserve sites were not limited to the novel. Working across genres thus helps me to attend to the specific formal, thematic and contextual devices that produce and preserve regional places and to suggest the importance of setting—however construed—in all genres of Victorian literary production. The non-fiction, historical documents circulated widely in the nineteenth century before the modern division of professions (such as contractor, engineer, or surveyor) had been entirely solidified, which subsequently limited their consumption and production to trained experts.¹⁵ Along with the novels I study, these texts provide discursive bridges between regional environments and their representation to a national audience. By exploring regionalism through contemporary topographic and architectural documents, I illustrate that they are the negotiation of numerous voices and varied knowledge of local environments and national relations. My project studies the hermeneutic intertextuality of blueprints, survey plots, and pattern books, and shows that these analytical texts are also representational attempts at conceptualizing space. I argue that we are able to better understand how these documents were constantly being re-used to reinterpret the knowledge of the land and its

¹⁵ Before formal academic training became a necessity for architectural study, for example, any talented and literate individual with access to some architectural treatises could educate himself in the field. There are numerous examples of mid- to late-nineteenth-century architectural treatises that contain long chapters on site selection, drainage, and many other technical matters, (even some related to geology), which were largely in reference to personal residences. Many of these books, the publication of which persisted well into the century, were written for a lay audience on the assumption (presumably along the model of earlier centuries) that a gentleman might choose to employ a builder but not necessarily an architect in planning his new home. This is a key part of my discussion of Eliot's *Middlemarch*; for a longer history, see Crinson and Lubbock.

people. By examining the orientation toward regionalism in documents detailing the layout of lived environments, I show that these documents should be analyzed as social texts in dialogue with regional works of fiction (including novels, sketches, tales, and illustrations) claiming local and national rootedness.

Victorian novels came from and entered into private homes and narrated the relationship between individual and community. They were also produced through public structures and distributed through public libraries and markets. Their representation of space and peoples, then, offers personal experiences of environment to a national audience. The examination of novels alongside non-fiction prose is consequently a fitting means of understanding the relationship between the local and national. Beyond arguing that nineteenth-century regional novels are appropriate evidence for understanding this historical relationship, though, my dissertation also enlarges our understanding of how national literary traditions are influenced by the narration of regional spaces. The treatment of regional narrative modes both influences the reception of those voices in critical evaluations of aesthetics and influences the cultural status of groups within the state.

This project draws attention to four formulations of English regionalism: the early-Victorian defenses of industrial Northern Englishness; mid-Victorian regional conceptions of mixed rural and factory spaces; the repurposing of non-industrial landscapes for leisure; and the late-century return to the materiality of countryside, now emptied of Romantic naturalism. In my project's first chapter, "Narrativizing the North: The Literary Geography of Greater Manchester," I explore how industrial novelists in England's North began to dismantle Romantic notions of regionalism through their

representation of Manchester.¹⁶ Manchester is the urban center of the world's first industrial region and, I argue, England's first region that is deliberately-crafted to be a middle-class cultural space. In the chapter's first section, I explore how Victorian Manchester became a powerful national symbol of anxiety over the consequences of industrialization, and how early-Victorian industrial authors from outside of England's north depicted the city as socially and spatially divided to a national audience. Focusing on native Mancunians' literary representation of their city in the second section of the chapter, I show how middle-class Mancunians were bound together not only by common political and economic functions, but by shared experiences of contemporary industrial change and by a commitment to civic society, which was represented materially in Manchester's urban topography. I spotlight a Mancunian novel, Elizabeth Stone's *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord* (1842), alongside work by Geraldine Jewsbury and Elizabeth Gaskell. I place these novels within the context of structural reform in mid-Victorian Manchester's urban and suburban cityscape – such as the establishment of the nation's first city parks – and the iconic figure of the “Manchester Man.” I conclude the chapter by arguing that the prominence of Manchester's regional literature asserted the cultural importance of regional identity in the national imagination and instigated the development of regional middle-class literatures outside of the territory.

George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1874) shares with Mancunian fiction an interest in reforming the social through the spatial. Chapter Two, “Reforming Spaces: Architectural

¹⁶ As R. P. Draper and other critics of the regional novel contend, regional fiction “seems to have been a growth of the late eighteenth century – a response to the Industrial Revolution, at first of a pastoral kind, but rapidly countered by a wish not only to do proper justice to threatened rural traditions (Draper 2).

Imagination in the Midlands,” argues that the orientation toward working-class spaces in Eliot’s novel represents a critically-overlooked facet of architectural reform. My interrogation of what I call *Middlemarch*’s “architectural imaginary” begins with a study of the rural working-class cottage. The picturesque cottage is an idealized English environment but lacks local moorings. Following the heroine’s waning interest in reforming this pastoral ideal, I proceed to study Dorothea’s rarely noted interest in a region in which local identity and architecture are closely allied: the industrial north. Dorothea’s aborted plan to “found” a factory town manifests a middle-class interest in remodeling the space of working-class life in a region known for its political turbulence. The abandonment of the industrial village as an appropriate location for Dorothea’s reforming efforts and her final investment in the county hospital mirrors a shift in spatial thought in the decade preceding the novel’s composition, as architectural reformers focused on institutional environments. The novel embraces the county hospital as a symbolic charitable site that defines the Midland’s discrete identity as a palliative space. The regionalism espoused in Eliot’s novel argues that the apolitical regional town is uniquely placed to mediate between northern industrial relations and southern pastoral fantasies.

My first and second chapters, then, expound upon two key themes of this project, middle-class regionalism and architecture. The remaining chapters juxtapose those themes with two further topics, recreation and preservation. Eliot’s representation of the rural, progressive region as a distinctive but apolitical area finds a corollary in the work of her contemporary, Anthony Trollope. In “Trollope and the Hunt for West Country Identity,” I look at the connections between narrative structure and local environment

made in Trollope's Barsetshire series. This series, I argue, pivots the regional novel toward an interrogation of England's attitude to its internal geography by questioning how a region can remain autonomous and yet be a resource for national identity.

Trollope's response is to use the practice of fox-hunting to preserve the West Country's unique place in the national imagination through sport. Hunting is portrayed as a deeply rooted rural custom through which the regional community claims a sovereign identity in the nation, but it is also a recreational activity practiced in the novel only by an exclusive group of gentry landowners. *Doctor Thorne* (1858), *Framley Parsonage* (1861) and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867) represent similar considerations of hunting and regionalism, and in the later novels Trollope exacerbates the threats to the rural landscape and explicitly moves the country estate from the realm of political power to that of social power. Situating the Barsetshire novels within hunting's historical place in nineteenth-century rural communities and the development of environmentalism, I suggest that Trollope advances a conservative ideology that the region's identity can only be sustained through preserving country house culture. Trollope represents hunting as an ingrained local custom, thus paradoxically using a national sport to promote regional insularity and justify the landowning class's social control of the region.

I end with "Wessex Relics: Thomas Hardy and the National Preservation Movement." This chapter continues to explore the preservation ethos that effectively institutionalized the middle-class attitude toward regionalism at the end of the nineteenth century by turning to the linked, but by no means identical, work of Thomas Hardy and Victorian preservation societies. I look both at the influence Hardy's work as an architect and interest in preserving England's architectural history had in shaping his portrayal of

contemporary society in Wessex, and explore how, for the Victorians, the work of cultural restoration had disturbing consequences. I first concentrate on *A Laodicean* (1881), a novel in which Hardy presents the crumbling Gothic castle as a problem for the gentry and middle classes to solve. I place this novel within the context of Hardy's Wessex fiction and creation of an identifiable, mappable literary region. Next, I sketch out Hardy's work for the Society for the Preservation for Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and suggest how the society positioned preservation as a middle and upper-class conservative political act. I argue that SPAB and its successor, the English National Trust for Historic Interest, consciously used English regional architecture as historical evidence for a nationalist vision of English life and social order. I show how Hardy's Wessex fiction and the work of the preservation societies tell two divergent stories that can help us think about regionalism's role in one of the Victorian period's most remarkable phenomena—namely the broad-based effort to preserve regional culture for recreation. The mounting concern for heritage was a symptom of a middle-class regional culture that had turned its attention from progressive identity to historical preservation.

While joining a relatively recent conversation among literary critics and cultural historians engaged in reassessing Victorian regionalism, *Communities of Place*—situated conceptually in the intersections of literary spatial studies and regionalism as well as geography—stresses the importance of grounding such reappraisals in the spatial organization and arrangements of lived experience.

CHAPTER ONE

NARRATIVIZING THE NORTH:

THE LITERARY TOPOGRAPHY OF GREATER MANCHESTER

Three years ago I became anxious (from circumstances that need not be more fully alluded to) to employ myself in writing a work of fiction. Living in Manchester, but with a deep relish and fond admiration for the country, my first thought was to find a frame-work for my story in some rural scene; and I had already made a little progress in a tale, the period of which was more than a century ago, and the place on the borders of Yorkshire, when I bethought me how deep might be the romance in the lives of some of those who elbowed me daily in the busy streets of the town in which I resided.

—Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (1848)

In her prefatory remarks to *Mary Barton*, subtitled *A Tale of Manchester Life*, Elizabeth Gaskell explains her rationale for writing this, her first, novel: turning to fiction, Gaskell explains, was a way to process a personal tragedy, the death of her son William. This autobiographical detail is fleeting, but critics have long read this oblique reference as the opening hint to a theme that runs throughout the novel. The experience of loss felt by many characters in *Mary Barton* is an important bridge between the middle classes and the working classes that Gaskell establishes in her depiction of life in Victorian Manchester. The preface goes on to describe those who live “in strange alternation between work and want” and the suffering of “too many of the poor uneducated factory-workers,” providing one more of countless accounts by which Manchester had become a kind of shorthand identifying the industrial north, and the

negative effects of industrial growth, in the nineteenth-century popular imagination (Gaskell xxxv). Almost by definition, all fiction written about Victorian Manchester had to grapple with this conception of the city.

I am interested, instead, in another aspect of Gaskell's preface: the "romance" of the "busy streets" in Manchester. Gaskell's preface to *Mary Barton* provides a rich entry point into the topic of Victorian regionalism. Here, Gaskell signals her intent to use the local, urban streets of the city as fundamental parts of her narrative. Gaskell describes how she initially desired to write a novel located in a rural landscape and in the distant past; her "first thought" was to situate her novel geographically and temporally apart from contemporary industrial concerns, on "the borders of Yorkshire," in order to escape her urban Lancashire home (Gaskell xxxv). Instead, Gaskell turns away from the pastoral and toward the factories, the working-class homes, and the middle-class suburban villas of Manchester, pioneering the urban regional novel in the process.¹ Gaskell's novel explores the affective, economic and social connections native Mancunians had for their urban environment by invoking a range of literary, political, and local voices. Simultaneously, Gaskell's *Mary Barton* educates its readers in Manchester's cityscape. Gaskell's ability to link middle-class and working-class interests through meaningful encounters with urban life make *Mary Barton*, then, a key piece of Mancunian literature. Gaskell's commitment to descriptively detailing Manchester's topography and local character was shared by many other living authors in the city, who promoted

¹ There are few critics who offer sustained readings of Gaskell's regional novels within the context of Victorian Manchester, though Gaskell's novel is consistently cited in passing as a prime example of the Victorian regional fiction. Two notable works are Harriet Guest's "The Deep Romance of Manchester: Gaskell's *Mary Barton*" and W. J. Keith's "Urbanism, Realism, and Region."

Manchester's regional distinctiveness as directly as they engaged with industrial capitalism and urban poverty. This first chapter will examine the cultural context that made Manchester so important to national and regional audiences in the first half of the Victorian period. I want to suggest that native, middle-class fictions about the "romance" of Manchester and the architectural reform of the city's public spaces, taken together, were both responses to a dramatic cultural shift in the mid-nineteenth century whereby regional identity entered the national consciousness through Manchester's overwhelming industrial growth. My attempt in this chapter is to make sense of the attitudes and perceptions of Victorian Manchester attempts to meet John Walton's call for regional histories that "pay sustained heed to the myths that are imposed upon the region's people and the myths by which they live" (Walton 29).

Why begin in Manchester? On one level, there is an obvious explanation: Lancashire, a county in northwestern England, was the world's first industrial region. Greater Manchester was (and still is) the political and economic center of Lancashire, and includes the boroughs of Oldham, Salford, Stockport, Wigan, and others. Though distinguishable by dialect, history, and local characteristics, the towns that collectively formed Greater Manchester were, and continue to be, linked by industry and trade. The construction of canal and railway systems in the early and mid nineteenth century promoted inter-regional cohesion and strengthened economic bonds between otherwise unconnected northern locations. Asa Briggs famously details how the rapid growth of the region's coal and textile industries poured into and passed through the capital city, which helped to make Manchester "the shock city of the age" (Briggs 87). The industrial centers of Lancashire emerged as national centers for consolidating middle-class political and

economic power, within which “cotton masters developed a separate identity and their own specific organizations,” according to Anthony Howe (v). The expansion of Parliamentary representation in Lancashire led to the declining influence of the landed gentry in the region, who were predominantly Tory in affiliation, and to the successful rise of Liberal and textile interests in the post-1832 reform period (Howe 98-99).² Industrialization had rapidly changed the political, economic, and physical landscape of the north and, to Victorian England as a whole, Manchester stood as a powerful national symbol of anxiety over the consequences of industrialization.

In addition to being at the center of the world’s first industrial region, however, Manchester was Victorian England’s first deliberately crafted “cultural region.”³ By invoking this term, I suggest that Greater Manchester be studied as a discursive concept that has not only political and economic coherence but cultural coherence, as well (Vall 3). As this chapter will demonstrate, Victorian middle-class Mancunians attempted to be as prominent culturally in England as they were economically. The cultural region of Greater Manchester formed a pivot point around which the middle-class in Lancashire, and surrounding northern locals, oriented themselves. They were bound together not only

² Yet, as both Howe and Alan Kidd points out, the association of the Manchester middle class with liberalism should not be overstated. After the abolition of the Corn Law in 1846, a reflection of the achievement of the influence of the “Manchester School” over national trade policy, Mancunian liberalism decreased against the rise of economic conservatism among the city’s manufacturing and commercial bourgeois. In the 1830s and 1840s, however, the uneasy alliance between middle-class manufacturers, devoted to political economy, and radical reformers, advocating for labor rights and legislation, thrust Mancunian politics onto the national stage. Within Lancashire, manufacturers consistently formed the majority of seats on city councils throughout the mid-Victorian period (Kidd, “Introduction,” 7, 8, 15).

³ I borrow this term from Natasha Vall. Vall usefully seeks “to avoid the pitfalls of essentialist history” by applying the term to study the North, a region which is not often studied in a cultural context (3). Vall is interested in northeastern English society in relation to governmental cultural policies in the second half of the twentieth century, but the pertinence of her study has, I would argue, a longer history.

by common political and economic functions, but by shared historical experiences and by a cultural commitment to civic society, which were represented spatially in Manchester's urban topography. It is not my intention to suggest that regional attachments are of greater importance than other facets—ranging from gender, race, religion, class, kinship and so on—that shape collective identity. Yet regionalism is a powerful category that literary scholars in particular have long neglected when considering the social and geographical development of the novel in the nineteenth century.

My focus, then, is on aspects of middle-class culture, specifically textual and spatial, that encouraged the growth of urban territorial loyalties in Manchester in the early-to-mid Victorian era. I will focus on Manchester's literature and urban landscape for two reasons. Cultural representations of northern England to a national audience were significantly routed through industrial literature and, concomitantly, the rise of regional industrial novels played a significant role in constructing regional identity and affiliations beyond the local within Greater Manchester. Secondly, the middle-class qualities—industry, autonomy, and progress—advocated for in Mancunian literature were materially embodied in civic building projects, which were undertaken to transform the face of 'grimy Manchester' in the mid-Victorian period. Civic spaces such as libraries, museums, town halls, and schools played crucial roles in the region's cultural landscape, materially demonstrating the region's identification with forward-looking modernity and progress. In other words, fictional and institutional narratives directly influenced the development of Victorian Manchester.

The following section will discuss the context in which the industrial novel emerged in the 1830s and 1840s. I review a range of industrial literature, from

Friedrich Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* to Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood*, which take as their primary focus working-class relations and northern fragmentation. I then turn my attention to middle-class Mancunian literature. I focus on two representative Mancunian novels: Elizabeth Stone's *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord*, and Geraldine Jewsbury's *Marian Withers*. Of the two novels I discuss, I look at *William Langshawe* in detail because of the novel's influential role in developing Lancastrian fiction. I place these novels within the context of changes to mid-Victorian Manchester's urban cityscape and civic architecture. Finally, I conclude by discussing the impact Victorian Manchester's cultural prominence had on the development of regional middle-class literatures outside of the territory. Although the topics of this chapter may seem expansive, all emphasize the contemporary and continued importance of studying a neglected regional literature whose heritage is recoverable in the physical and textual landscape of England's north.

I. GREATER MANCHESTER AND INDUSTRIAL LITERATURE

The rapid population growth and urbanization of England in the nineteenth century, particularly in Manchester and other northern industrial cities, is well documented but a review of Victorian Manchester's urban growth and the overwhelming response provoked by this growth throughout the nation is still valuable. The population of Manchester grew over forty percent between 1811 and 1821. It is hardly surprising that Manchester's population growth outpaced the construction industry's ability to meet the demand for housing, particularly for low-rent homes that yielded little profit. The

existing housing quickly became overcrowded and new buildings were often hastily built with poor materials in poor locations (Moore 73). These factors helped to dictate the form of Manchester's urban growth, a form that is familiar today but alien to many in the nineteenth century: at the center of the city was a business district, which was adjacent to a district of mixed working-class housing and factory areas, all of which was encompassed by a zone of bourgeois suburbia and, further beyond, rural areas (Gunn 114).

Suburban Manchester grew in proportion to, and away from, industrial Manchester; whatever land or waterways that proved useful for industrial development in the city repelled middle-class housing. Industry became concentrated in east and southern-eastern Manchester, along canals and river networks. With the east and south sides of the city dominated by factories and, further out, lime and coal industries, the middle-classes had begun turning to the fringes early in Manchester's industrial development (Rogers 3). According to H.B. Rogers, "it has always been in the north and south that the dormitory expansion of Manchester has been most rapid[.] . . . Here was a safe and suitable environment for the migrant middle class, on high ground, overlooking the town" (Rogers 5). Housing within Manchester's suburbs further reflected the economic divisions between their owners. The upper middle classes clustered in the north, housed in large villas and attached to large garden parks. The more solidly bourgeois business owners were often based in the south, where access to the city was slightly easier and the landscape slightly less scenic. The withdrawal of Manchester's elite from the city center began in the late eighteenth century and accelerated in the nineteenth, so that the initial economic forces driving the migration—rising land values

in Central Manchester and inexpensive land for housing in the periphery—had become a social imperative to signify middle-class status by the time Elizabeth Stone published *William Langshawe* in 1842 (Fishman 84-6).⁴

The social and political segregation of Victorian Manchester is a theme widely discussed in contemporary literature. Freidrich Engels, in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844), offers a particularly rich description of Manchester's troubling shape:

The town itself is peculiarly built, so that a person may live in it for years, and go in and out daily without coming into contact with a working-people's quarter or even with workers, so long as he confines himself to his business or to pleasure walks. This arises chiefly from the fact, that by unconscious tacit agreement, as well as with outspoken conscious determination, the working-people's quarters are sharply separated from the sections of the city reserved for the middle class[.] . . . I know very well that this hypocritical plan is more or less common to all great cities . . . but at the same time I have never seen so systematic a shutting out of the working-class from the thoroughfares, so tender a concealment of everything which might affront the eye and the nerves of the bourgeoisie, as in Manchester. (Engels 57)

Engels portrays the city as fundamentally isolated between zones of working-class squalor in the core of the city, zones of bourgeois suburbs outside that core, and boulevards that dissect these zones. His method of interpreting Manchester's growth is to explore urban development and social relations in tandem, and, in so doing, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* is a classic text in the field of historical materialism. Central to his purpose is to understand how urban spaces are produced by social relations and by the desire to conceal those relations. While other industrial authors were often more motivated by specific political interests than questions about the social

⁴ See Scola, pp. 30-35, for further discussion of Manchester's suburban growth.

production of the urban environment, Engels's work on the concealed working-class districts of the city, along with reports by James Kay-Shuttleworth, Edwin Chadwick and others, helped to focus the concerns of the industrial novel. Engels's assertion that the working people of Manchester live in "wretched, damp filthy cottages, that the streets which surround them are usually in the most miserable and filthy condition," was a charge that was frequently corroborated in fictional and non-fictional accounts of Manchester.

Industrial novelists embraced Engels's sense that the north was a house divided against itself. Certainly, the emphasis on exploring divisions between classes, not geographic specificity, is the central concern of most industrial fiction. Yet the geographical estrangement of many industrial novels makes this feature an important one to note. Authors continuously set their novels in isolated, symbolic locations, and displaced their plots from specific geographical environments in order to aggregate northern industrial experience. A look of a few generic images of the north in three otherwise politically-divergent industrial novels might help to illustrate this point. Francis Trollope's *Michael Armstrong: the Factory Boy* (1839), Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* (1841) and Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854) are dissimilar in tone, concern, and aesthetic appeal. However, each author was motivated to write their novel by a desire to critique industrial capitalism and, moreover, to address specific political and philosophical concerns: Trollope and Tonna wrote their novels in response to the Ten Hours' Movement, while Dickens's novel responded to utilitarianism and the factory

system.⁵ Apart from a general sense of shared interests, and despite their many differences, each of these novelists locates their bleak tales of industrial life within a ruined and generic northern landscape. Deep Valley Mill, the factory through which Trollope's analysis of industrial working hours, overseer abuse, child labor, and female employment is charted, is "built in a wild desolate spot, where the chances are about ten thousand to one of any of the travelling torments who take upon themselves to meddle" (Trollope 119-20). Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* is set in the northern city of "M," a name that generically suggests Manchester as the setting for this melodramatic and religious tale. Yet Tonna's representation of an undistinguished and undifferentiated northern town emphasizes the general flattening effect governmental negligence and industrial growth has had on northern cities rather than any real place in particular. Dickens's Coketown (presumably a recreation of Preston, a Lancashire weaving town which he briefly visited in preparation to write the novel) is "a town of red brick, or brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black, like the painted face of a savage" (*Hard Times* 60). Dickens's archetypal northern town epitomizes southern English beliefs that northern regions of England were "inhabited by people equally like one another" and that their cities were primitive, capitalist machines (*Hard Times* 60). Together, these novels geographically isolated alien northern environments and fragmented the industrial experience.

⁵ Susan Zlotnick claims that "Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna and Frances Trollope never really contest . . . dominant cultural representations of the manufacturing districts and their inhabitants" (147).

In his Young England novels—*Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845), and *Tancred* (1847)—Benjamin Disraeli offered more accurate portrayal of geographical and social relations in the region, but he too accentuates northern fragmentation, of the political kind.⁶ In addition to describing factories that are not entirely dissimilar to Trollope's Deep Valley Mill,⁷ Disraeli looks at those that are "the glory of Lancashire" in his novels (*Coningsby* 55). In *Coningsby*, the Lancastrian Mr. Millbank "had built churches, and schools, and institutes; houses and cottages on a new system of ventilation . . . [and] had allotted gardens" (*Coningsby* 56). The effusive descriptions of this factory, and of the Trafford factory in *Sybil*, illustrates Disraeli's hope that the physical layout of mills and their surrounding environments could materially exemplify benevolent paternalism, and that aristocratic *oblige* might live on in the work of ethical mill owners who made housing and education as important as safe working conditions in their mills. The means by which Disraeli moves between working-class and middle-class environments in *Sybil*, however, shows as much Disraeli's belief in the potential of the region as it does his belief in the region's entrenched political divides. Charles Egremont, the novels' aristocratic hero, is inspired by a Chartist journalist to gain a political education while disguised as a reporter who is investigating the conditions of the industrial north. Through this conceit, Disraeli represents the scale and character of regional

⁶ Benjamin Disraeli describes *Sybil* "as an accurate and never exaggerated picture of a remarkable period in our domestic history" (Disraeli xiv). This claim has received much critical attention: while scholars of Chartism, led by Dorothy Thompson, consistently endorse Disraeli's historical precision, Patrick Brantlinger has argued that Disraeli's Tory-Radical politics makes the novel more interested in proving the working classes "to be mistaken" than in reflecting social reality (Dorothy Thompson 112; Brantlinger 100).

⁷ See, for example, the description of the corrupt and malevolent industrialists Shuffle and Screw in *Sybil*.

fragmentation within the Chartist movement more clearly than its unity. While touring various manufacturing districts, Disraeli explores specific local economies, social structures, and causes of unrest that negate larger political union. The failure of working-class politics is ultimately tied to lack of leadership and political vision. As Rosemarie Bodenheimer notes, Disraeli pits contemporary politics against historical models and, “by recuperating the suppressed truths of the past, invalidates the politics of the present in the service of an imagined future” (169).

Industrial novels encouraged readers to see the region as a place to be pathologically explored because of its extreme difference. Conditions in northern industrial cities were undeniably grim, and it is understandable that, as Manchester sprawled out of knowable understanding, the city became as prominent a symbol as a real location. Carlyle named the city “sooty Manchester!—it too is built on the infinite Abysses; overspanned the skyey Firmaments; and there is birth in it, and death in it;—death in it;—and it is every whit as wonderful, as fearful, unimaginable, as the oldest Salem or Prophetic City” (307). More simply put, in the words of Engels, Manchester was “the classic type of modern industrial town” (50-1). Yet the portrayal of the north by many non-northern authors often obscured as much as it revealed. Sarina Moore, in her study of working-class housing in Manchester, suggests that Engels’s emphatic charge that “‘no comfortable family life is possible’ . . . perhaps goes too far” (80). Moore points out that, unlike the dilapidated and antiquated cottages dotting the landscape of England’s agricultural regions, urban working-class domestic housing was generally much better in quality. Manchester had one of the best and earliest canal systems in the country. This cheap, efficient transport system made brick cheaper to transport, thus increasing the use

of brick for residential construction. Consequently, by the 1830s most urban housing was being built out of brick—a strong and generally dry building material. Moreover, Moore continues, “by the middle of the century the construction of multiple and relatively large windows, even in low-cost housing, was fairly common. These larger windows increased ventilation in most houses, a chief concern of the sanitation reformers” (80).

My intent in taking this brief look at industrial literature is to underscore the extent to contemporary writing represented and fragmented northern identities for a national audience, while simultaneously obscuring contemporary changes and adaptations in Manchester’s urban environment (a topic that will be explored more fully below). In novels about the north by authors outside the region, geographical, social, and political divisions are presented as insurmountable challenges to the creation of collective identity and territorial affiliation. This position was put forth in the industrial novel even as Mancunians emerged to contest the image of their city as squalid and their leaders as negligent. As I will show, the treatment of Greater Manchester in local literature forms a necessary part of the midcentury response to industrialization and the development of the Victorian novel.

II. MIDDLE-CLASS MANCHESTER

Manchester’s reputation as a grim, inhumane place had a pervasive hold on the public imagination in the nineteenth century, but I want to suggest that the factories, boulevards, suburbs, and streets of Manchester were also changeable spaces that challenged such stagnant images of the city. What type of story can reflect the industrial

experience? How should the relations in the city be described? How should the urban landscape be understood? These are the questions framing my readings of novels of Elizabeth Stone and Geraldine Jewsbury, Mancunian authors whose fictions are representative of the regional fiction produced in Manchester to satisfy the growing market across the nation and within the north for authentic interpretations of industrial experience. Stone's *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord*, and Jewsbury's *Marian Withers* offer their readers alternative responses to the disturbing spread of urbanization and industrialization by creating progressive visions of Manchester that directly countered a perception of the city as corrupt, atomistic, dirty, and hostile. I turn to these novels in particular because each reflects narrative strategies and issues running throughout nineteenth-century Mancunian fiction more broadly: (1) a concern with accurately detailing the behavior of Manchester's middle class; (2) a conviction that Greater Manchester's topography embodied northern identities and ambitions; and (3) an interest in linking Manchester with upward mobility. Jewsbury and Stone, to varying degrees, engage with the problematics of class and class-consciousness while promoting the autonomous status of the "Manchester" or "Lancashire" character. These novels provide a middle-class perspective on middle-class society, and thus offer a valuable look into wider historical processes involving the imaginative and historical construction of the region.

Stone's novel was the first written about the manufacturing districts of Manchester by a native and, as such, provides a paradigmatic example of middle-class Manchester's self-definition of itself (Mitchell). Elizabeth Stone published *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord* (1842) at the height of Manchester's national prominence,

as a burgeoning corpus of reformist literature, the crisis of the hungry forties, and a rapidly changing construction industry all focused attention on the city. Yet this two-volume work has received scattered critical attention,⁸ apart from speculation about the possible influence Stone's novel had on Gaskell's *Mary Barton*: both novels prominently feature plots concerning the seduction of a working class woman by a mill owner's son and a murder committed by a member of a trade union.⁹ Given the narrative similarities, one might assume that *William Langshawe* would emphasize concerns comparable to Gaskell's novel and to other industrial novels: class relations, labor conditions, and factory reform. Instead, Stone's project is to "infuse into smoking chimneys and cotton bags" an explanation of that "which has raised Lancashire to so elevated a rank in the country" (Stone I.14, 3). I take *William Langshawe* as the focus of this section because the novel employs narrative strategies and attendant spatial metaphors to make a forceful argument about Greater Manchester's regional identity and relations. Published several years before Gaskell wrote urban regional novel, Stone had attempted to argue, in her own work, that Greater Manchester's unique character is manifested in the urban topography of the region. Stone's novel is intent on rejecting the idea that northern regionalism can be represented simply through local histories and customs: "In many of the southern counties, peculiar costumes and antiquated customs present themselves on every hand, and would give the idea of habits transmitted through many generations, even if

⁸ For critical appraisals of *William Langshawe*, see Melanda, pp. 115-7; Easson, pp. 69-71; Kestner, *Protest and Reform*, pp. 69-81; and Bodenheimer, pp. 69-84.

⁹ See Frycksteft for a comparison of the two novels.

tradition and history did not attest the fact. In Lancashire this is not the case” (Stone I.2-3). Lancashire, which “bids fair to be one day a continuous mass of building,” defines regional modernity and thus demands a modern type of regional fiction that takes into account the elements and symbols of modern culture. After all, ““God made the country;” but the town— . . . man made that” (I.7). The novel’s bizarre mixture of subplots—including tales of a worker who goes insane from the terror of his induction ceremony into a union; a cotton lord who almost sells his daughter to a fellow manufacturer; a mugging on the side of Mount Vesuvius; and a loquacious hermit—results in a curiously hybrid portrait of Mancunian society, which is “sentimental” but not uncritical (Stone 3). Stone’s novel introduces several themes that later come to dominate native accounts of Manchester in fiction: the character of the Manchester Man; the interdependence of public and private spheres; and the influence of Manchester’s urban architecture on its inhabitants.

Stone’s novel concerns first-generation Lancastrian mill owners in the 1820s, but her representation of Manchester reflects the culture and architecture of the city at the time of the novels’ publication in 1842. The novel also responds to a recently published account of the factory system, John Fielden’s 1836 governmental report, *The Curse of the Factory System*. Stone defends the factory system as an imperfect but valuable industry by pointing to its local and national worth. Her defense of the system is woven into a story that quickly, and often awkwardly, shifts between ethnographic, romantic, and pastoral genres. The novel’s initial historical account of Lancashire’s culture and industry focuses on the domestic habits of the Langshawe family and Langshawe’s fellow industrial magnates, whose movements between various locations—visits to the

Collegiate Church, musical evenings at home, days at the races, activities at the Exchange—document the customary habits of middle-class Manchester society. Langshawe's financial speculation results in a large loss, which he attempts to remedy by marrying his daughter, Edith, to the son of a neighboring mill owner, John Balshawe. Balshawe, in turn, has seduced a worker at his father's mill, and draws her from her fiancé, Jem. This separation drives Jem to join a union and to murder another mill owner's son, after which Jem is placed in an asylum for the insane. Balshawe's transgressions are exposed and Edith is allowed to marry her true love, Frank, who has, in the meantime, traveled to Italy, married, and become a widower, after his fair Italian wife dies from exposure to the cruel Mancunian winter. The path to true love never did run quite so convoluted.¹⁰

These contrivances of plot are important, however, to the spatial movements made in *William Langshawe* and key to the reason I focus on it. I argue that Stone uses Greater Manchester's urban and suburban topography as a narrative strategy in her novel. Moreover, I want to suggest that it is Stone's desire to describe Manchester's city center and surrounding environments that makes the temporal displacement of the novel necessary. Stone links the developments of Manchester's topography to a moment in Lancashire's past, the 1820s, when Stone claims the region retained a strong pastoral

¹⁰ When Stone's novel appeared in 1842, reviewers were quick to hone in on her defense of the factory system, but were less appreciative of her portrait of Mancunian society. One reviewer, writing in *The Monthly Review*, acknowledges that the novel "of course smacks of Manchester" but reads Stone's representation of Mancunian society as a general condemnation "against the *gentlemen* who are *made* in Manchester, and who are Lords of Cotton; assailing along with this mushroom *noblesse*, the whole frame of society in the middle classes, that is created and controlled by them" (507). The portrayal of "the Cotton Lord, William Langshawe, himself" is particularly noted as an indication of "her misconception and mismanagement" (*Monthly* 508).

feature. It is through learning about the region's pastoral roots, and how these roots are preserved in Manchester's modern suburbia, that the non-native reader can understand the region: Stone's Lancashire is a testament to England's bucolic past and urban present. Thus, movements in the novel's plot are also movements through Lancashire's real and imagined topography; each phase of the plot has a spatial corollary. Beginning with Manchester's bucolic history and an introduction to the region's rural members, the plot then concentrates on middle-class domesticity in suburbs, and then explores threats to the region's economic and familial affiliations while in the city center. The novel lingers on descriptions of urban life and zeros in on Lancashire's urban core, in which Stone describes the many civic spaces that represent connections between Manchester's middle and working classes.

Apart from being a representative novel about middle-class Manchester, I turn to Elizabeth Stone's work for another reason as well: by looking at Stone's own domestic and political relationships, I can engage with more general, and frequently overlooked, aspects of Victorian Manchester's middle-class society. Stone dedicates *William Langshawe* "To John Wheeler, Esquire, Late Proprietor of 'The Manchester Chronicle,' whose arduous career as a public journalist continued through a long course of year, and during many troublous times . . . by his daughter" (Stone n.p.). This dedication would have immediately declared Stone's political allegiances to a Mancunian audience. The *Manchester Chronicle* was founded in 1781 by Stone's grandfather, Charles Wheeler, and was a popular Tory paper, with a circulation in the early nineteenth century of over 3000 copies a week. The paper painstakingly avoided controversy (in 1819, the journal refused to publish an eye-witness account of the Peterloo Massacre written by one of the

paper's own journeymen, Jeremiah Garnett, who later would leave to help found the liberal *Manchester Guardian*) and had a loyal if declining readership among anti-reform Mancunians. The *Manchester Chronicle* folded in 1838 (Garnett; Taylor). Though Stone married and moved to London in 1830, her familial connection to Manchester and Manchester's politics was maintained through her work and the literary work of her brothers, Charles Henry and James Wheeler. Charles Wheeler's first publication was a sketch of a famous Mancunian rector in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, which helped him launch a career with the journal (Smith 290). James Wheeler was more firmly entrenched within Manchester's literary society. He published *Manchester: Its Political, Social, and Commercial History* in 1836, an anthology of *Manchester Poetry* in 1838, and managed the *Manchester Chronicle* until the paper closed. The promotion of Manchester's civic and bourgeois identity was a political, as well as a familial, project for Stone.

In the introductory essay to his volume of *Manchester Poetry*, James Wheeler enumerates the characteristics of a "Manchester Man"—a list that is echoed, almost verbatim, in the introduction to *William Langshawe* and describes the character of her industrial magnate—and attests to the power this figure had over Victorian Manchester's construction of its own history and identity.¹¹ Wheeler notes that the "peculiar properties which characterize 'Manchester Men'" are equally apparent in their talent for industrial innovation and in their "various associations for the encouragement of philosophy, literature, and the arts . . . music, also, is worshipped here with a true devotion;—painting

¹¹See also Kestner, *Protest and Reform*, pp. 69-70.

has many friends” (Wheeler ix-xi). On one level, Wheeler and Stone’s interest in highlighting Manchester’s historical and cultural commitments through the lens of Manchester’s industrial leaders recalls Thomas Carlyle’s famous thesis, in *On Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841), that “great men” shape history.¹² Carlyle’s text details the leadership qualities of men who attain national prominence, including the character of England’s modern “captains of industry,” and in so doing, elevated a topic that interested politicians and fictional writers from Walter Bagehot to Charles Kingsley. Apart from her personal investments, then, Stone’s focus on the “cotton lord” and presentation of Manchester is a variation of the ideological construction of English identity in the post-1832 reform period.

On a more local level, though, the figure of the independent Manchester Man had become a crucial part of the region’s mythologizing of its past and a means through which small or isolated populations came to see themselves as part of the larger region of Greater Manchester in the early nineteenth century. Wheeler and Stone give the figure of the Manchester Man prominent space in their works because the efforts of Manchester’s “great men” were crucial aspects of the ardent fidelity they, and other Mancunians, felt to the region. The rise of James Brindley, the engineer of Manchester’s Bridgewater Canal, James Watt, inventor of the steam engine, and Richard Arkwright, born in Preston and the son of a tailor, appealed to Mancunian ideals of innovation, entrepreneurship, and upward mobility. Charles Dellheim has argued that the embrace of certain figures key to

¹² See Morris, pp. 35-47, on the changing representation and style of political leadership in mid-century.

the history of England's industrial history, be they from Lancashire or not, by Mancunian writers, artists, and politicians expressed middle-class attempts to legitimate their identity through "fabricating traditions" (Dellheim 1-29).¹³ But these figures have more use to their regional audiences than their role in validating middle-class identity; they are prominent figures through which Manchester constructed a territorial identity and claimed a cultural reach beyond the local and into the national.

As with Stone's novel, Ford Madox Brown's mural series in the Manchester Town Hall provides a good case in point of the way the Manchester Man operated in Manchester's self-fashioning. The murals, as architectural historian Mark Crinson observes, show Manchester's "links back to a longer history of innovation and enterprise binding groups of people by shared ambitions and shared ideas of the local and the national" (Crinson 197). Brown's murals were commissioned to provide Mancunians with a pictorial narrative of their city's civic identity. According to the artist, they charted "the most comprehensive epitome of the rise and progress of Manchester that can be compressed into 12 pictures" (qtd. in Treuherz 172). The murals include artistic renderings of, among others, *John Kay, Inventor of the Fly Shuttle* and *Crabtree Watching the Transit of Venus*. The frescos depict men from Manchester's history who exemplify the region's commercial spirit, industrial importance, and international significance.¹⁴ Stone's novel was published nearly thirty years before the mural series

¹³ For a sustained treatment of the "cult of the past" as a reflection of bourgeois deference to aristocratic histories, see Wiener and Macleod.

¹⁴ When the mural series was completed in 1893, the *Manchester Guardian* declared that they "raise[d] Manchester henceforward to a new position among the cities that have known good art from bad and have used this knowledge to give beauty and dignity to their public buildings" (Ford Madox Brown obituary).

was commissioned in 1876, but the blend of myth and history apparent in this series is strongly prefigured in the opening of Stone's novel. The beginning of *William Langshawe* offers a lengthy description of Lancashire's regional history to the reader, starting, as do the mural series, with the Roman "fragments . . . in many parts of the county [that] still attest the high importance which these polished intruders attribute to the location" (Stone I.2). Brown continues to follow Stone when she moves into a description of Lancashire's "several valuable and beautiful ecclesiastical buildings" and the "settlement here of the Flemings in the fourteenth century" (Stone I.2, 3). Through this history and her focalization on one Manchester Man in particular, William Langshawe, Stone's novel trains its audience to understand the region's character by charting an easy interpretive path between the topography of Manchester and Manchester's industrial greatness.¹⁵

As the novel moves from the overarching topographical character of Lancashire into a specific environment, the Langshawe suburban villa, Stone balances generic images of middle-class culture with descriptions of Mancunian uniqueness in order to exemplify how the Victorian investment in domesticity—specifically in the physical site of the home—was as stable a signifier of middle and upper-class identity inside the north as it was outside. Stone is intent on showing the extent to which the Victorian home was the site of tantalizing forms of self-fashioning in Manchester, as in the rest of the nation. In the initial description of the cotton lord's home, the narrator emphasizes its opulence.

¹⁵ *The Manchester Man*, a novel written by a Mrs. Linnaeus Banks in 1876, shows the currency this figure continued to hold throughout the nineteenth century. The story of a foundling from Manchester's canals raised in poverty, the novel charts the familiar rise of a native son who advances through hard work, scholarship, and morality. See Sykes, 136-7.

The home is awash in displays of the wealth amassed through textiles manufacture, and Stone describes the sumptuous dinners held within the home, the wine collections, and expensive pieces of art that fill the home, in minute detail. The Langshawe's house reflects an aspirational affiliation with, and containment of, aristocratic society through its carefully structured architecture: the family areas include an "elegantly furnished boudoir" and drawing room with "an *elaboration* in the style," areas which are contrasted with the more chaste dining room, "equally expensive and luxurious, though somewhat more somber in its adornments" (Stone I.16, 37). The proliferation of expensive furnishing and decoration draws the reader ever deeper into the house—there is always another room to explore, more wealth on display. At the heart of the house is Mrs. Langshawe, who "had the appearance of an over-fed well-dressed housekeeper," and the cotton lord, whose "enunciation was even less polished than his lady's" but with a "physiognomy . . . of a superior stamp" (Stone I.16, 17). In the description of the home and the Langshawe couple, the novel attempts to relocate subjectivity from person to place as a narrative technique: places speak for their owners.

Stone's strategy of linking characters to their possessions and environment is not unique, but her insistence that middle-class Mancunian society be read through their domestic suburban spaces and built environment is. Stone does not evade the aesthetically offensive parts of Manchester's environment: "the coal strata are numerous, good, and incalculably valuable . . . but the working of them necessarily must and does deface the appearance of the county in which the seams prevail" (Stone I.8). Similarly, "to the list of acquired outward disfigurement we may add the railroads . . . [that] originated in Lancashire, where they run various directions, and have been proved of the

highest commercial utility” (I.8). In effect, Stone argues that southern critics should not disparage the aesthetic appearance of Lancashire, from which they economically benefit. Rather than entering into a narrative of Manchester through industrial environments, the plot begins in Langshawe’s neighborhood in Lime Grove in the north-east of the city. The cotton lord’s home includes all that a modern consumer could ask for, in a setting familiar to readers throughout the nation:

The windows overlooked a pleasure-ground well arranged in lawn and parterre, kept in the most exquisite order, and exhibiting all the approved rarities of shrub or flower; and skirting this garden were conservatories and forcing-houses, which would not have disgraced the mansion of a peer. At the distance perhaps of half a mile, was a clustering mass of cottage buildings; and close to it one of the unsightly erections peculiar to the district raised its cumbrous form. Various detached residences were scattered at intervals around; a handsome, but somewhat staring new church, crowned a small eminence; meadow and woodland, interspersed with red brick buildings of various forms and qualities, but most chiefly of the unsightly kind appertaining to manufacturers, spread over a tract of interesting country. (Stone I.14-5)

This entry point into the plot demonstrates Stone’s narrative intent of engaging primarily with Manchester’s middle-class domesticity and identity in the novel. The suburb is separated from the competitive commercial zones of the city and the factory walls, as well as from the reader’s view of Lancashire, which is presumably full of “cotton bags, cotton mills, spinning-jennies, power-looms and steam engines; smoking chimneys, odious factories” (Stone I.1).¹⁶ Instead, Stone offers an alternative response to the industrial north by representing the suburban environment as an integral space through which Lancashire accesses its connection to traditional English rural life.

¹⁶ James Wheeler’s home, which was located in Prestwich, a town just north of the city, indicates the Wheeler family’s own elevated socio-economic status.

Moreover, Stone is determined to show how Manchester's suburbia exemplifies progressive middle-class identity. She uses the Langshawe's quasi-urban, quasi-rural "beautiful house" to signify that the heart of the region must be understood by entering physical and narrative territory from "a few miles" outside Manchester itself (Stone I.16).¹⁷

Stone claims that the growth of suburban Manchester reflects Lancastrians' affection for rural spaces, and not a rejection of the violence, dirt, and slums in the city. The suburban spheres in which the Langshawe's locate themselves privileges privacy, the family, and individual expression through decoration and furnishings, housed within a standardized, undifferentiated and unthreatening environment. The narrator gestures toward the factories just beyond, but the stage for the novel is set in the comforting picturesque space. When Langshawe's business collapses, and he is forced to sell his "beautiful mansion, his magnificent furniture, his fine old wines, his carriages, horses, splendid plate," he economically takes "a neat, small house at some little distance from this neighbourhood," close enough to his fellow manufacturers to continue as an effective member of his society (Stone II.218).

Stone argues that Manchester's suburban homes can manage and contain the reader's experience of the industrial north. Her description of the city is chock full of the symbols of traditional village life—a church on a hill, cottages, conservatories—because the suburban environments Stone is describing are otherwise very modern. These cultural

¹⁷ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall argue in *Family Fortunes* that the adulation for rural life and developing domestic ideology augured the middle classes movement away from urban center and into the newly fashionable suburbs (Davidoff and Hall 157-66, 357-70).

and historical buildings reassuringly link the familiar to the unfamiliar domestic environment of the manufacturer, unfamiliar both because the industrial middle class who live in this environment are seemingly unknown to the implied, non-native reader, and also because the suburban enclaves in which Mancunians resided were, in the 1840s, a relatively recent phenomenon. Lynne Hapgood has argued that a longer history of demographic movement from urban centers to suburbia in London did not become prominent in literature until the late Victorian work of Arthur Conan Doyle, George Gissing, and William Pett Ridge (Hapgood 287-310). She suggests that the movement in their writings, from the city to the suburb, made the “public awareness” of suburbia more immediate than it had previously been (Hapgood 287). Yet while London writers might have registered the impact of economic segregation later in the century, Stone’s novel reflects the historical reality of Manchester’s early Victorian suburban growth and considers the degree, rapidity, and impact of suburban growth on urban topography. The suburban, domestic setting, Stone suggests, is both factually accurate and spatially represents a blend of industrial and rural values. For extended periods in the novel, then, the pastoral suburban villas metonymically speak for their owners. In these bucolic middle-class homes, Stone attempts to remove the “shock” from the reader’s interpretation of Manchester.

When the novel moves into urban spaces, Stone continues to present the material topography of the city a reflection of middle-class Mancunian civility. Her representation of the city claims that the industrial Victorian middle classes’ response to the early chaos caused by industrial capitalism was to reform the city and construct symbolic spaces to demonstrate middle-class Manchester’s commitment to civic culture (Gunn 114). The

novel thus undertakes a thorough mapping of Manchester's public spaces, referencing specific roads, districts, and neighborhoods throughout the novel. The topographical impulse reaches its height when the narrative is en route to the "Manchester Races" taking place just outside the city, where the entire city's population seems to have gone. The narrator dons the guise of an average middle-class Mancunian businessman wandering the streets:

The clock of St. Anne's church sullenly tolls the hour, and startles the square with its echoes[.] . . . The elegant semi-circular exchange is as quiet as its own shadow; no eager murmuring of voices is heard to issue from its portal; you peep in the windows, you do not see even a solitary "elderly respectable gentleman" poring over a newspaper. No, it is the races! . . . [O]n your right hand Market Street, on the left St. Mary's Gate and its continuous stretch their long arms, and the Market Place lies before you[.] . . . You come to the Royal Hotel, and walk past the Albion, up Piccadilly; all looks hot and quiet, and in Portland Place the very houses themselves are asleep. You return, the Infirmary Gardens look as dull and as dusty as usual; the Infirmary Pond as dark and unsightly as ever[.] . . . You pass along Mosley Street; the lofty and spacious houses give little token of habitation; the Portico steps are unoccupied, and no hope of its library being open; the Assembly Room door is shut; the new Club House appears to be empty; the Royal Institution looks more dungeon-like than ordinary. You pass St. Peter's church; the Oxford Road bears none of the usual tides of human life on its broad surface; the groaning factories are still; the tall chimneys send forth no smoke; the usual din is hushed. The reason? The Millocrat and his thousands are at the races. The Concert Hall is passed, and you look to the Hall of Natural History[.] (Stone I. 225-7)

I quote this scene at length because it provides a unique tour of Manchester's urban center. The novel's nomadic path to the races becomes a "greatest hits" tour of Manchester, starting at the neo-classic St. Anne's church in the center of the city and heading generally west, and passing the city's most prominent architectural and civic monuments along the way. Though the walk itself takes a lengthy chapter to narrate—the narrator charts, in all, a three and a half mile walk through the city—the circuitous tour of

the city is contained within a relatively short distance in the city center. Stone represents Manchester's built environment as an affirmative sign of the middle-class control over its urban organization. Through the comforting figure of a genial flâneur, Stone guides the reader into an implied identification the walker and implies appreciation of the ideological monuments apparently fundamental to Mancunian society and germane to the period, down to "Bulwer's new novel" inside the library. Indeed, the guide through the city emphasizes it as a space of consumption. Though the narrator notes the churches passed by, which presumably should be open, her walker is intent on shopping and surveillance: unable to spend at Mr. Satterfield's, a wholesale and retail drapery store, the walker moves on to Portland Place and the Portico Library. This tour through the city decisively highlights the middle-class architectural highlights of Manchester. The narrator draws the reader's middle-class cultural knowledge and the narrator's local knowledge of Manchester's social zones together in order to render the city legible. The city center, then, is symbolically mapped through institutions of middle-class culture: Stone's Manchester is replete with civic institutions of the most progressive kind and displays of the wealth that built these solid middle-class spaces.

The ethos of comfort and civic interest which suffuses Stone's city, however, is determined by the cautiously navigated route taken. The narrator is careful to direct her reader through recently widened streets, such as Market Street, which was cleared and rebuilt in 1822, and the city's most symmetrically organized avenues, such as Corporation Street, on which the "elegant semi-circular exchange" was situated. Industrial buildings, such as the spinning mill which stood between the genteel Albion Hotel and homes at Portland Place on Little Lever Street, are passed by without

comment.¹⁸ The Exchange is as far northeast as the narrator will permit; the walker then turns only slightly south and west, walking in circles to avoid the notorious slums in Deansgate, just south of the “Hall of Natural History.” As Simon Gunn notes, “while the central area was surrounded by working-class districts, some of the city’s worst slums impinged directly on the city’s main streets” (118). Stone avoids taking the novel as a whole into any spaces that require sustained engagement with labor or the city’s poor. Rather, the monuments to public life Stone observes are material representations of ideological state apparatuses, visible instruments of collective identity and middle-class power. This representation of the bourgeois heart of Manchester, by implication and avoidance, depends upon the perception of the city as a place of dirt and violence.

Instead, Stone uses the city’s architecture as figurative tool to contain and discipline the interpretation of Manchester by making the city safe in the reader’s mind. In order to create this impression of safety, though, Stone empties the city of its inhabitants. The threat posed by peopling the city is that their subjective experience of the city could open the environment to rhetoric and discursive interpretation. Stone cannot contain the interpretation of language in the way she can attest to the power of buildings to produce the subject’s experience of space.¹⁹ The quiet guide is a lone figure, not in the

¹⁸ See Swindells, pp. 7-12, for more on the social environs of Portland Place, which no longer exists.

¹⁹ The concept of architectural determinism I am describing held tremendous power over Victorian architects and critics, who frequently attest to the power of buildings to produce a subject’s experience of space. John Ruskin, for example, believed that the Gothic was not just an architectural type, but also an indicator of social history. In *Out of Place*, Ian Baucom argues that part of the cultural work of Ruskin’s criticism was identifying and authenticating particular English spaces: “Ruskin took over, refined, and helped to preserve a romantic ideology that identified Englishness with certain symbolic *and* literal spaces of belonging” (50). These conceptions of architectural determinism have been largely dismissed by modern critics. See, for example, Fredric Jameson, “Is Space Political?” and Jacques Derrida, “Point de Folie—Maintenant L’Architecture.”

crowd, but in the gathering accumulation of place names, which punctuate the prose as distinctly as to the façade of buildings passed by on the street. The narrator's emphasis on the walker's attachment to his locality is focalized through his comfortable criticism of these spaces: a street-wise native, the narrator notes the walker's observation of the "dark and unsightly" pond alongside the Infirmary, and the "dungeon-like" Royal Institution, without allowing the moments of critique to overwhelm the description of the deserted city.²⁰ This purposely sedate walk through the city suggests a wholesale rejection of the urban environment for all but social and civic purposes.

The narrator, instead, presents Manchester's vibrant urban life primarily through scenes of formalized social events native to Manchester, which have the effect of sanitizing the appearance of social interaction in the city and providing object lessons in the social power of the middle-class over the city space. At the same time, though, these scenes do reflect historically accurate regional events in Greater Manchester—a point that is frequently overlooked by critics, who often read scenes of social interactions in *William Langshawe* as a series of celebrations of industrial life by showing the symbolic vitality of middle-class society, from dinner parties to at-homes and parties. Rosemarie Bodenheimer has argued that Stone's sterilized treatment of industrial life is symptomatic of a "critique of industrialism . . . concerned especially with the difference between

²⁰ The exacting tour Stone represents would not have been possible fifteen, or even five years, after the publication of her book. Reconstruction and urban sanitization occurred at an increasingly rapid rate in Manchester's city center as the century progressed. In 1851, the Pond alongside the Manchester Royal Infirmary and Lunatic Asylum was replaced by a wide promenade, designed by Joseph Paxton to accommodate statues of the city's civic leaders. The Old Town Hall, which had been built in 1822 in a Grecian style, complete with a colonnaded façade, was replaced by Alfred Waterhouse's neo-gothic palace in 1877 (Parkinson-Bailey 56-95). Slum clearances around the business and commercial districts further changed the city's layout and streamlined travel between areas in the city center (Gunn 116-7).

vulgarity and gentility of manner” (Bodenheimer 72). Yet, I suggest, Stone’s representation of Manchester has as much to do with defining Lancastrian regionalism as it does with elevating the genteel reputation of the industrial north. Her elaborate depictions of public celebrations propose that certain psycho-spatial engagements with urban life unite a broad range of Mancunian social groups. Hence her interest in a public dinner, held at the Town Hall for Sir Robert Peel, and in the Manchester Races, where the entire city seems to have fled during our solitary guide’s walk through the city. The function of social festivity is to provide a sense of security and continuity through the shared experience of pleasure, which Stone suggests are collective expressions of regional belonging.

Indeed, Stone’s representation of central social events of the dinner do not project great gentility (at the dinner in honor of Peel, Langshawe and Balshawe are both overcome by “tipsy stupefaction”) but, instead, demonstrate Manchester’s regional culture (Stone II.114).²¹ Stone attributes the necessity of describing civic events, including the musical “Cottonocracy Festival” and the public dinner in the Town Hall for “Sir Robert Peel and the Cottonocracy,” to their popularity. Through these social events, however, Stone represents middle-class Mancunian culture *en masse* and projects the cultural aspirations of the Mancunian middle class.²² The public dinner for Peel is held in

²¹ Stone specifically avoids presenting ceremonies or events that might have national importance in her novel. David Cannadine points to “great royal ceremonies,” which, he writes, “were not so much shared, corporate events as remote, inaccessible group rites, performed for the benefit of the few rather than the edification of the many” (111). Cannadine argues that for much of the nineteenth century there was little public interest in municipal rituals that had a strictly official character.

²² On the status of civic rituals in elite groups in England, see Pioke. See also Snow and McAdam, “Identity Work Processes in the Context of Social Movements: Clarifying the Identity/Movement Nexus.”

the Town Hall, where he is joined by “five hundred gentlemen” (Stone I.114). In his fictitious speech, Stone has Peel refer “to the time when Manchester was unknown, save as the station of a Roman encampment; with this he proceeded to contrast her present condition, representing the welfare of the nation at large as being so indissolubly connected with *her* well-doing” (Stone II.105, 108). Stone promotes events such as these in terms that emphasize the “overwhelming . . . excitement” with which they were anticipated by the city’s population, glossing over political and economic fragmentation (II.94). The anticipation for the major events of Manchester’s social calendar is couched within a rhetoric that makes Manchester the centerpiece of international culture: the epigraph to the “Cottonocracy Festival” chapter proclaims that “the world is here” (Stone II.94). Stone insists that Manchester “had attained a higher celebrity for the superior quality of its usual public concerts than perhaps any other out of London” (Stone II.94). Stone places public celebrations in the architectural centers of Manchester to invest Manchester with the kind of magnificence appropriate to its image as a world city and the hub of English culture.

The narrative oscillation between urban built environments and suburban homes attempts to direct the reader’s interpretation of the city to domesticity and environments of pleasure. The Manchester Races provide Stone the opportunity to depict a popular social ritual in a mediating space through which she can again assert Lancashire’s rural identity. The northern community Stone depicts gathering at the Manchester Races shows a crowd of Mancunian workers participating in a popular event that is organized and paid for by middle-class Mancunians, thereby projecting a cultural, apolitical display of regional unity. As Mike Huggins observes, sport “could be portrayed as a powerful

distraction to Chartism and other working-class political disaffection” (Huggins 3).

Stone’s interest in the Races manifests a desire to redirect the power of the crowd and the rhetoric of reform into a celebratory display of Mancunian society:

[There are] boys with hurdy-gurdies and white mice; with barrel-organs and dancing dogs; with French pianos and tame monkeys. There are old women bawling “Last dying speech and confession,” and the younger ones with touching ditties[.] . . . There are old Jew peddlers with Turkey rhubarb, and other delights; and itinerant mediciners[.] . . . There are beggars of all sorts . . . betting and gambling are the order of the day; blackguardism and quarreling are necessary concomitants; and “all the currents of a heady fight” are visible at all times in almost every direction. (Stone I.235, 241-3)

The working-class crowd, depoliticized and outside of the city center, here become agents of the narrative strategy: the “families of the Cottonocracy” can mix with the “mass of plebeianism” in a rural communal setting. By contrasting the previous chapter’s silent tour of the city by an isolated walker with this vibrant crowd, Stone deflects political radicalism through the invocation of local voices for the middle-class auditor. She uses an abundance of tactile imagery (“swamped,” “touching,” “quarreling”) to recreate the tangible excitement experienced by Mancunians on holiday (Stone II.235). The figures that would have inspired fear in the city center, such as the men “betting and gambling” (curiously absent in name but present in action) become in this setting a source of visual and aural pleasure. The mutual “exhibition of . . . generous, general, open, hearty hospitality,” which is “a distinctive characteristic of Lancashire” links the crowds on the moor to Manchester’s middle classes, who gather in the “new grand stand” (Stone II.251, 236). The Races provide Manchester with an image of itself as an egalitarian, social city.

The description of a day at the Races, akin to her description of suburban Manchester, reemphasizes Stone's desire to claim for Lancashire a pastoral identity through the effective neutering of working-class political agency and a turn toward middle-class romance. Just as the walker's tour of Manchester allows Stone to sidestep encounters with workers and crowds in the city center, the fact that this is, after all, a historical novel allows Stone to avoid discussing the events held at Kersal Moor in the 1840s, which included a series of massive Chartist meetings in 1838. Instead, the journey to Kersal Moor allows Stone to indulge, once again, in a nostalgic appreciation for Lancashire "some years ago," when the field was the site of "a wild and beautiful scene . . . a wide tract of moorland, beautifully diversified into hill and dale" (Stone I.237). Now, though "the revel of the tiny fairies among the mossy hollows" seems to have gone, "on the slopes of the hills, and in many of the sheltered nooks," the rows of turf for the racecourse "appear now but as part and parcel of the moor itself" (Stone I.238). The appropriation of the landscape for pleasure has created another kind of space for generic performing: now the land can become part of a medieval romance, where "the operative *Restaurateurs* erect their tents" and "THE CUP is always given to 'the prettiest girl' on the grant stand to hold whilst it is run for" (Stone I.238, 245). Thus, though "flaring brick mansions are starting up, tall chimneys are emitting their volume of smoke, and the whole district gives token of the improver's—or, as regards the picturesque—the destroyer's hand," Stone offers a particular kind of urban community that holds a modern image of itself within a romanticized, pastoral environment. Kersal Moor, along with the suburban domestic home, plays a key role in this fantasy, in which modernity is

imaginatively manipulated to delimit the distance between urban reality and the general identification with pastoral pursuits.

The narrative desire to drain Manchester of working-class discontent and embrace rural life problematically shifts a novel about Manchester far away from social realism as it reaches a conclusion. The city's architecture and public events symbolize civic culture, but the narrative's eventual return to pastoral spaces to resolve the novel's marriage plot suggests that the essence of Manchester society lies in its increasingly fictitious rural, and romantic, heart. The narrative abandonment of ethnography reaches its ludicrous height in a vignette celebrating "a modern hermit" (Stone I.84). Living in "one of these wooded dells or cloughs which are so beautiful a feature of Lancashire scenery," the hermit's picturesque cottage was "formed of fantastic bars of wood, thickly entwined with honeysuckle and China roses" (Stone I.85). The hermit's home is the repository of romance. His cottage offers Stone another opportunity to refute the image of Greater Manchester as a mess of noise, activity, and overcrowding; rather, here the region is quiet, peaceful, and decorative. By recreating Lancashire in these terms, the text activates a range of meaning and values associated with typical images of England's pastoral heritage—close to the land, connected to history, and naturally appreciating nature—that in the modern urban context seem increasingly endangered.

Stone's projection of Manchester as a symbol of urban regionalism that cannot shake its love of a rural past was necessarily challenged by the expanding growth of the city and more nuanced treatments of the suburban middle classes and urban modernity. Her novel, though, deploys a close understanding of Manchester's topography and reflects a little-studied yet widely shared affiliation with middle-class ideals and concerns. Indeed,

despite the fantastical turn Stone's projection of the suburbs as a garden in the city takes, her sense that middle Mancunians had a responsibility to protect their pastoral heritage was shared more generally. As Sarina Moore shows in *The City Real and the City Imagined in Victorian Manchester*, various other city leaders in later Victorian Manchester were interested in the preservation of urban green spaces, seeing in the protection of these spaces opportunities for health, recreation, and social control. A traveler to Manchester, writing for the *Chambers Edinburgh Journal* in 1844, notes that "the scheme of establishing public parks for the free resort of the community was set on foot in June 1844, and in August 1846 the grounds I have spoken of were opened, and handed over in trust to the civic corporations of Manchester and Salford. Never before has such munificence been displayed for any public or philanthropic event" ("Two Days" 338). Manchester built the first public park in the world intended for public use, paid for through public monies and private donations. If, using Yi-Fu Tuan's terminology, the middle-class home was potentially a "place" of belonging and comfort, then green areas in the urban landscape were necessary to provide "space," or freedom for the imagination (Tuan 3). As Moore argues

Victorian urban reformers also recognized early in the century the necessity for open, green spaces in the developing city. . . [the] the rhetoric associated with both the parks movement itself—how and why reformers argued for the need of parks—and with the imagined urban landscape created by the parks rhetoric, or how the parks rhetoric shaped perceptions of the City itself. The rhetorical figure of "the parks" eventually served a two-fold function: one, as an indicator of what constituted a truly "urban" environment; and two, as a metaphoric location for the shared imaginative life of the working classes[.] . . . Whether or not the physical parks themselves were truly socially integrated, the rhetorical space of the parks showcased to the nation a united Manchester—a Manchester in which all classes of workers and owners shared the same public values; a Manchester in which all classes worked together to create public, social spaces; and a Manchester in which

those classes could not only peacefully coexist, but could also thrive. (Moore 160, 10)²³

Literary examples of public projects such as city parks are few, but it is clear in the literature of the period Manchester provided an unparalleled opportunity to explore the image of middle-class Lancastrians as a group rich in material wealth, commercial preeminence, and political awareness. Stone rejects any mention of Manchester's working-class urban topography because she views the built environment as essentially mimetic: if the buildings in the city center reflect the middle-classes civic commitment, so too can the city's hidden slums manifestly show the moral state of Manchester's working classes. The construction of the relationship between the city's civic architecture and design, however, and its reputation as a space of disorder and dirt, is continuously destabilized. As Steven Marcus notes, a feature of modern life is "the sense that the city

²³ According to Moore, "The creation of public, urban parks was a particularly Victorian project—and as with the Victorian period more generally, the space of the public parks proved to be a complicated mixture of both public activities, and private experiences. One of the earliest historians to pay sustained attention to the complex relationship between public and private spaces in the urban park was George Chadwick. Chadwick was particularly interested in the tension between competing expectations for parks: on the one hand, an individual expected to find the quiet and solitude of "Nature" in the middle of the city; on the other hand, he also expected to find space for communal sports and leisure activities. Chadwick's pioneering work in the mid-1960s appeared at just the historical moment when urban parks themselves were falling into disrepair and dereliction. After the Second World War, responding to both the high cost of maintenance and changing social norms, municipal governments increasingly chose to both take down the original Victorian park fencing—allowing public access to the parks at all hours—and to not replace the retiring corps of park keepers with new employees. The result, in short, was disastrous: urban parks became unmonitored, unsafe, and unkempt. More subtly, as the garden historian Hilary Taylor has argued, "an unfocused and vaguely emotional reaction against the Victorian ideologies represented in the public park [...] contributed to the neglect of so many of these once-magnificent landscapes" (201). With the exception of a few notable studies in the 1970s and 1980s, urban parks were neglected by both scholars and the public until the mid-1990s.¹ Fortunately, as David Lambert notes, "The recognition of the cultural significance of nineteenth-century urban parks was arguably the most important development in garden history and the conservation of the historic environment in the 1990s" (99). Excellent scholarship in the 1990s by landscape, architecture, and garden historians like Terry Wyke, Hilary Taylor, and Hazel Conway laid the groundwork for the restoration of these spaces—and that restoration began in earnest in the mid-1990s when the Heritage Lottery Fund invested £300 million in urban parks" (Moore 160-61). See Frank Clark, "Nineteenth-Century Public Parks from 1830"; James Walvin, *Leisure and Society, 1830-1950*, pp. 2-46; S. Martin Gaskell, "Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasure"; H. L. Malchow, "Public Gardens and Social Action in Late Victorian London."

is unintelligible and illegible. The city is experienced as estrangement because it is not perceived as a coherent system of signs, as an environment communicating to us in a language that we know” (257). The key challenge in Manchester’s regional novels was determining how to maintain collective social identity and create a language to explain the rapidly developing urban sphere. Stone’s contribution to this project is a vastly oversimplified reaction to modernity’s “estrangement,” but her novel crystallizes several themes dominating other middle-class portrayals of Manchester in fiction: the interdependence of public and private spheres; the ability for Mancunian architecture to structure the social life of the city; the design of the city to segregate social groups; and the civic monuments elevating Manchester’s prestige as a world city.²⁴

III. MIDDLE-CLASS MOBILITY

Thus far I have concentrated my attention on the deterministic influence Manchester’s topography had in Elizabeth Stone’s novel. I want to now briefly look at the work of another little-known Mancunian novelist, Geraldine Jewsbury. Jewsbury’s novels are demonstrably of the same mode as Elizabeth Stone’s in that they represent a social environment where Manchester Men assume the central roles. In her fiction, the hopes and fears of the middle classes again take the center of the stage within an identifiably regional community. *Marian Withers* was serialized in the *Manchester*

²⁴ Other examples include *Irkdale, or the Old House in the Hollow: A Lancashire Story* by Benjamin Brierley (1868) and *Wenderholm, a Story of Lancashire and Yorkshire* by Philip Gilbert Hamerton (1869).

Examiner and Times in 1852, and later published as a three-volume novel. The novel is often read as a reply to *Mary Barton*, “where the manufacturer is restored to his pedestal” (Howe 111).²⁵ I want to look at this novel because it was written by a contemporary of Stone’s and Gaskell’s and offers another take on the story of the self-made Manchester man, a figure that, as we have seen has a central place in understanding the Lancastrian imaginary.

In *Marian Withers*, Jewsbury carefully manages the mobility of middle-class characters through the region, and engineers regional relationships in which political reform and working-class consciousness are diminished through the interactions with civic-minded middle-class institutions. In particular, Jewsbury is intent on elevating Manchester’s educational institutions, which, she argues, serve the regional goals of promoting class unity, fostering middle-class Manchester Men, and opening opportunities for moral improvement. While Stone fixates at length on vulgar displays of wealth among first-generation mill owners and projects gentility into their future, Jewsbury presents the mass of wealth created by regional industry as an opportunity for broad social progress. In an article published in 1847, Jewsbury stated her educational creed and belief in the beneficent power of industrial wealth:

Those who first led the movement for teaching the poor to read and write were rather moved by the feeling of benevolence than by a recognition of the PRINCIPAL that the lower orders have the same RIGHT to be furnished with the means of instruction that they have to be kept from *starvation*. The higher classes are morally bound to instruct those beneath them[.] . . . The higher classes must *earn* their fraternity with the lower, or, instead of brothers and friends, they will be

²⁵ Susan Zlotnick argues that Jewsbury “uses her novel *Marian Withers* to link the triumphant progress of capitalism to the advancement of women” (66).

dangerous, and jealous rivals[.] . . . The practical republicanism of trade, has forever emancipated the lower orders from a condition of permanent inferiority....Wealth is a great unlimited undefined possibility—there is hardly anything it cannot do for its possessor. (“Civilisation” 446, 448)

Jewsbury promotion of working-class education by the “higher classes” with a carrot-or-stick approach: education is the worker’s right, and without access to their rights, workers will become competitors for access to progress. In *Marian Withers*, published several years later, Jewsbury downplays the threat of working-class violence in favor of a narrative that embraces science and industry as the keys to human progress: “Education,” Jewsbury writes, “is the great thing they need; education of the same kind and quality which is given those above them” (“Civilisation” 107). John Withers, Jewsbury’s model Manchester Man, stands as a moral counterpoint to mere social ambitions. His educational opportunities have enabled his productive potential, which in turn has elevated the social and economic advancement of his family and region.

Jewsbury’s novel is identifiably Mancunian because of her insistence that achievement is dependent on industrial experience, but also because of the familiar narrative strategy she deploys to illustrate her thesis. Jewsbury’s novel employs a narrative of upward mobility that is central to many Mancunian novels, from Gaskell’s *North and South* and Thomas Grenhalgh’s *Lancashire Life; or, the Vicissitudes of Commerce: A Tale of the Cotton Trade*, to Isabella Banks’s *The Manchester Man* and Mrs. Humphrey Ward’s *The History of David Greene*. In Jewsbury’s novel, John Withers and his sister are rescued as children from poverty by a middle-class Mancunian philanthropist. Withers is an ideal self-made man who, after briefly entering a workhouse, apprentices at a cotton-spinning factory and teaches himself to read and

write. His ambition and desire for education drive his innate industrial genius, which give him the ability to see the interworkings of machines as “a living creature; he had obtained an insight into the power which moves it” (Jewsbury, *Marian* I.27). Withers invents a new form of spinning mill, allowing him to establish his own mill and educate his daughter, Marian. Withers later becomes a philanthropist himself and partners with another middle-class manufacturer to “promote the education, and to ameliorate the condition of the working-classes” (Jewsbury, *Marian* III. 238). Withers becomes an model Manchester Man by the novel’s end, but more interesting than his rags-to-riches story is the implied account of Manchester’s working classes that Jewsbury provides in her industrial fable. Winthers’s rise shows Jewsbury’s belief that, as T. Thomas notes, “even a child born in the symbolic darkness of the Manchester slums, without a name or the means of earning of living, could enter the social pattern which begins with the imposed discipline of the workhouse, moves through the process of self-evaluation . . . and culminates in the acquisition of wealth and moral authority” (Thomas 199). Jewsbury advocates for liberal middle-class reforms within an industrial Cinderella story, but she is clearly attempting to be more realistic and more political than Stone.

The geographical arc of wealth charted in *Marian Withers*, however, mirrors its movement in *William Langshawe*: money earned throughout the region circulates through Manchester, from which social and civic projects are endowed. The novels’ characters continuously beat a path between the neighborhood around Withers’ rural factory and the city: the narrative begins on “a regular Manchester wet day”; Alice Withers enters into “a respectable service in Manchester”; Marian is allowed on “the high road to Manchester” to shop; John Withers “did not lose a moment in setting off to Manchester to know the

worst” of a financial failure (Jewsbury, *Marian* I. 5, 55, II.66, 74). Yet the narrative is largely located outside of Manchester, and it is in the rural Lancashire district that John Withers and his partner, Mr. Cunningham, reproduce the civic institutions that Stone had mapped in her tour of the city center:

A Lyceum had been established, to which Mr. Cunningham had presented a hundred volumes, to serve as the beginnings of the library, and John Withers supplied it with some London newspapers, and the best provincial ones, together with such periodicals as Mr. Cunningham recommended. The subscription was three-pence per week – for which they had the use of a well-warmed and well-lighted reading room, and access to the library. (Jewsbury, *Marian* III.240)

Jewsbury’s representation of working-class adult education follows a predictable, paternalistic pattern, in which upper-class largess is used to ‘improve’ the condition of the working classes and redirect their “savage” instincts (*Marian* III.241). As David Thiele points out, in Victorian Manchester “the ranks of the bourgeois status elite – primarily those in Liberal, professional, educated commercial, and Nonconformist clerical circles . . . saw an opportunity and duty to guide their status inferiors not only among the . . . working classes but also among the . . . opulent but under-refined bourgeoisie” (Thiele 226). As hinted at in *William Langshawe*, Victorian Manchester was awash in a host of educational and intellectual societies that provided cultural ways in which the industrial elite could promote themselves and Mancunian identity. Literary, artistic, and scientific institutions punctuated all parts of Manchester’s urban topography, and were intended to “improve” all classes of society. Among the most prominent were the Manchester Athenaeum Club for the Advancement and Diffusion of Knowledge, the Royal Manchester Institute, the Manchester Mechanics Institute, and the Manchester

Lyceums, all of which promoted adult education.²⁶ The movement of Jewsbury's characters between Greater Manchester's urban center and rural districts links the values of manufacturers to a discursive map of the region's civic culture.

Jewsbury opposition to a dominating center of identity is one reason discussions of northern regionalism often get weighed down in questions of how to define the north, but this opposition is also an important ideological means through which northern regionalism is constituted. Victorian Manchester was a flagship representative of the industrial north, but, as Stone's and Jewsbury's novels help to illustrate, culture and economic power were diffused throughout the region. They argue that the preservation of rural and civic values within the heart of the urban region was the defining sign of middle-class Mancunian regional identity and central to its construction. The inability of modern critics to read these aspects of urban culture as regional, and specifically northern, certainly owes something to the aesthetically lacking, often inarticulate, novels produced there. Yet there is more to be said about these texts, apart from claiming Mancunian novels to be aesthetic failures. The fundamentally different kind of urban space that emerged in Victorian England's north became the standard model for cities throughout the country as the century went on: the region's peculiarity diminished as its influence was, consciously or not, seen in metropolitan environments throughout the nation. In more recent times, the economic and industrial decline of the region has contributed to the widespread dismissal of northern culture and cultural institutions which

²⁶ See essays by Arline Wilson, Dianne Sachko Macleod, Louise Purbrick, Simon Gunn and Kate Hill in *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1914*.

is still felt today. Dave Russell observes that “the representation of the ‘northerner’ whether as composite supra-character or more local figure, had long hardened into cliché by the mid-twentieth century” (Russell 284). A better understanding of Manchester, that first industrial city in the world, helps us to better understand the foundations and trajectory of industrial and post-industrial regions – and England’s cultural identity.

IV. RE-PRESENTING MANCHESTER

In this chapter, I have highlighted the ways in which Mancunian middle-class literature and the city’s social spaces were contested by a national industrial literature, which fragmented northern identities, and by a regional literature, which projected unity through its literary and civic topography. Because of the complexity of Victorian Manchester, this study cannot begin to cover all aspects of the literary urban experience. I have, most glaringly, neglected to focus sustained attention on the Victorian writer whose *oeuvre* is most explicitly associated with Manchester, Elizabeth Gaskell. *North and South* might seem a particularly apt novel to include in this chapter. After all, Gaskell’s novel is commonly used in classrooms for its look at the relationship between “masters and men”; a thriving Gaskell tourist industry lives on in Lancashire and Cheshire; and her home, a Greek Revival building in suburban Manchester, has recently been restored by England’s Heritage Lottery Fund North West. This modern devotion to Gaskell’s work derives from the long-standing search for the real that also preoccupied her Victorian audience, who saw in her novel seemingly authentic and genteel northerners. To understand the north,

Margaret Oliphant wrote in her review of the *North and South*, “turn to Mrs. Gaskell . . . whose knowledge of Lancashire life is superior to that of any modern fictionist” (Ballantyne 368). Gaskell was praised for her portrayal of the southern middle-class heroine, Margaret Hale, who “through the influence of her femininity, is able to pacify many of the hatreds and heal many of the pains” (Montégut 426). More modern critics, though, have interpreted *North and South* as penance for Gaskell’s ambivalent reaction to radical politics in *Mary Barton* and have critiqued the former novel for its apparent conventionality. Raymond Williams argues that the novel follows a typical Victorian pattern in solving class conflicts with money. While recognizing in the novel important scenes of private life displayed in the public realm, Catherine Gallagher nevertheless concludes that the text’s families are isolated “from the larger society” (Gallagher 148). Sally Shuttleworth dismissively argues that the novel ends “in the safe surroundings of a middle-class drawing-room” imply her belief that Gaskell ultimately avoids politics in the novel (Shuttleworth xxxiv).

Indeed, such readings suggest that Gaskell novel merits attention here. However, critics perhaps inaccurately assume that Gaskell, repressed by her domesticity and class, sought to again explore radical working-class politics and seek a fictional resolution to social conflicts that were intractable in actual experience in *North and South*, as she had done at the conclusion of *Mary Barton*. Instead, Gaskell’s *North and South* shares many of the same bourgeois concerns and themes that other Mancunian novels did. *North and South* is in many ways a prolonged meditation on industrial bourgeois society. The novel tells the story of an educated middle-class woman who is separated from her pastoral home in the south and is cast into the turbulent sphere of the industrial north. By means

of Margaret's middle-class migration narrative and movements through the city, Gaskell explores the urban topography of Manchester, which includes working-class and middle-class domestic homes. The hero of the novel, John Thornton, is a representative Manchester Man whose rise from below epitomizes the narrative of upward mobility characterizing Mancunian novels.

Yet I only turn to *North and South* in conclusion because, though Gaskell is Manchester's most famous literary daughter, her portrayal of Victorian Manchester is one of the most inaccurate. Though *North and South* is clearly concerned with the lack of household taste and education among Manchester's middle classes, she directly avoids representing the institutional reforms and variations to Manchester's environment that were happening all around her. Instead, Gaskell's novel represents an image of the city that is purposely anachronistic. The dominant image of Manchester's city center is Thornton's mill-home, which is situated just off "the principal street in Milton" (56):

The lodge-keeper admitted them into a great oblong yard, on one side of which were offices for the transaction of business; on the opposite, an immense many-windowed mill, whence proceeded the continual clank of machinery and the long groaning roar of the steam-engine, enough to deafen those who lived within the enclosure. Opposite to the wall, along which the street ran, on one of the narrow sides of the oblong, was a handsome stone-copped house,—blackened, to be sure, by the smoke, but with paint, windows, and steps kept scrupulously clean. It was evidently a house which had been built some fifty or sixty years[.] . . . Margaret only wondered why people who could afford to live in so good a house, and keep it in such perfect order, did not prefer a much smaller dwelling in the country, or even some suburb; not in the continual whirl and din of the factory. (*North and South* 102-3)

Margaret's negative reaction at the clean yet industrial setting for Thornton's home reflects her awareness and taste for suburban domesticity, but the mill-house is clearly anachronistic in more ways than one. Margaret's surprise in finding Thornton's home in

the center of Manchester is historically accurate. In Bradford, Yorkshire, for example, middle-class homeowners made up a mere 7 per cent of residents in the city center in 1851 (Koditschek 216). With pollution, noise, and commercial land values all rising, most middle-class mill owners such as Thornton moved to suburban villas for both economic and domestic reasons, again reflecting a trend in many northern cities (turned into narrative strategy in *William Langshawe*) toward the geographical separation of work and home spaces. The location of Thornton's home registers a nostalgic impulse in the text to return to older models of industrial domesticity. "First-generation manufacturing entrepreneurs often lived on site because," observes John Tosh, "they valued on-the-spot supervision of their business before everything else; it was the second generation which shunned the mill-house and lived in style elsewhere" (Tosh 16).²⁷ Thornton's identification with Manchester's factory culture finds full expression in his mill-house, but his domestic environment confirms that he is not as typical a specimen of the Manchester Man as most readers might assume. Thornton's argument that "there is a difference between being a representative of the city and the representative man of its inhabitants" epitomizes his vexed narrative role in Manchester's middle class (303). While Gaskell's novel offers an acute reading of relationships between cultural elites,

²⁷ Another indication that Thornton, Gaskell's representative Manchester Man, does not inhabit and move through the city as his contemporary fellow factory owners would do occurs when Thornton, rejected by Margaret, boards "an omnibus passing—going into the county" (*North and South* 191). Temporarily performing the role of a professional commuter, Thornton's retreat into the country offers him natural solace—but also takes him through transitional urban, suburban, and country social spaces surrounding the city: he is "borne away,—past long rows of houses—then past detached villas with trim gardens, till they came to real country hedge-rows, and by-and-by, to a small country town. Then everybody got down; and so did Mr. Thornton, and because they walked away he did so too. He went into the fields" (*North and South* 192). Thornton's unconscious trip into the country is represented as Romantic and instinctive, even while his method of travel and the journey he takes are typical.

mill owners, and workers, then, her work does not necessarily expand our understanding of her literary contemporaries.

As Moore notes,

Victorian Manchester was more than just a second-city to London. It had its own vernacular architecture, its own middle-class culture, and its own collective, contested, contradictory images of what it meant to be an industrial northerner in the nineteenth century. Paying careful attention to particularly Mancunian forms of urban experience fundamentally broadens and deepens our understanding of the Victorians themselves.
(12)

William Langshawe and *Marian Withers* are ideologically distinct novels. However, the topographic and civic discourses through which they depicted Greater Manchester in the Victorian period directly influenced and partook in the larger development of Manchester's regional literature. The novels claim the city's civic topography as the signifier of Mancunian identity by arguing that the native, bourgeois experience of the cityscape should dictate the terms of national perceptions and representations of the north. Stone's and Jewsbury's accounts are revisionist in the extreme. Yet to read these novels in light of Manchester's urban topography is to see the northern fiction and industrial experience newly, as fantasies that demonstrably are linked to the local and contemporary region. Mancunian novels participated in remapping Victorian spatial relations. As such, their repressed anxieties about the relationship between place, meaning and control are indicative of larger anxieties in nineteenth-century England: how should space be negotiated? Are there stable locations in a novelistic landscape? How should unfamiliar spaces be interpreted? These questions are prompted by the collisions that occurred in fiction from within and without England's north, inviting readers and authors throughout the nation to scrutinize regional and national spatial orders.

CHAPTER TWO

REFORMING SPACES:

ARCHITECTURAL IMAGINATION IN THE MIDLANDS

In these Midland districts, the traveler passed rapidly from one phase of English life to another; after looking down on a village dirty with coal dust, noisy with the shaking of looms, he might skirt a parish all of fields, high hedges and deep rutted lanes; after the coach had rattled over the pavement of a manufacturing town, the scene of riots and trades union meetings, it would take him in another ten minutes in a rural region where the neighbourhood of the town was only felt in the advantage of a near market for corn, cheese, and hay, and where men with a considerable banking account were accustomed to say that “they never meddled with politics themselves.”

—George Eliot, *Felix Holt* (1866)

George Eliot’s famous preface to *Felix Holt, the Radical* uses the conceit of a coach journey across her native region, the English Midlands, to explore the social and economic geography of Victorian England. The landscape of the Midlands provides a convenient backdrop for Eliot’s interest, in this novel, in political radicalism; or, more specifically, in the breaking up of traditional patterns of society brought about by national politics, imperialism, moral decay and domestic neglect. At the time of the publication of *Felix Holt*, many counties in England were feeling the strain of a shifting relationship between urban and rural communities in the nineteenth century as the unprecedented rate and scale of social, industrial, technological and economic change transformed local communities. Cities demanded increasingly more agricultural production at a time when

rural populations were decreasing; country life and work were quickly changed by mechanization and industrialization, while newcomers to the cities had to adjust to unfamiliar ways of living and conditions of employment; poverty was commonplace in both the countryside and the cities, while the newly wealthy became landowners and urban leaders. Works such as Thomas Hardy's "Wessex Tales" and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* explored the theme and helped to popularize the now familiar, even assumed, hermetic difference between rural and urban territorial identification in England. The perspective of Eliot's generic "traveler," on his way through the region, engages the novel in a general interest in the grounds of social life and the disjoined realms of social activity, but the traveler does not pause; the journey continues.

However, while we should acknowledge that the traveler could be moving through a generic English environment, we need also to recognize that this passage does describe a specific geographical community that is quasi-rural, quasi-urban, and attached to both: the Midlands. As the last chapter demonstrated, polarizing titles such as *North and South* downplay the difference between regions and the complexity of spatial relationships within these territories. More to the point, these broad categories hopscotch over the places in between, the places left behind in a broad, homogenized geographic imaginary of English regions. It is intention in this chapter to call attention on a region uniquely placed in English geography and society to respond to the pressures of Southern, rural traditionalism and Northern, urban industrialism. Rather than re-invoke the antagonism between north and south, this chapter pays heed to the intra-regional relationships that shaped nineteenth century geographic and cultural identities and, in particular, shaped the identity of the region in between, the English Midlands. The above

passage points to the background of contrasts in intimate association with each other that helped shape this region's distinctive identity. In George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1874), where past, present, and things to come were mingled one with another, defining regional and local identity against the dual pressures of the surrounding geographies was at least as potent as in Manchester.

George Eliot's writing centers on "these Midland districts," the counties surrounding the rising manufacturing center of Birmingham. It was in these counties that the problems of urbanization and modern labor, separated from traditional connections with the land, were most felt as more established patterns of order and labor changed or disappeared. The changes which were taking place in this part of England had therefore more than regional significance; they embodied a particular case of the general transition from rural to urban and industrial society throughout the nation. Thus, from the whole experience of West Midlands during the early and mid Victorian era, the space of time I argue is described in *Middlemarch*, both with regard to the major events of national history, and to their own local problems and mundane preoccupations, there emerged a growing sense not only of the region's own special identity, but also of the particular contribution which it had to make to the wider redevelopment of society.¹

I focus on Eliot's *Middlemarch* for three reasons: the novel is explicitly concerned with mediating between the local and the national, the regional and the universal; *Middlemarch* offers a unique opportunity to explore the historically specific movement from "regional" to "provincial" literary categories in the mid-Victorian period; and,

¹ See Money for an excellent illustration of the Midland's historically buffered identity.

finally, Eliot's novel shares and further develops a theme first explored in Mancunian bourgeois regional novels, namely, a commitment to reforming the social through the spatial. In what follows, I discuss these first two rationales, before turning to the bulk of the chapter: how Eliot comes to identify the Midland's spatial and regional identity in *Middlemarch*. My interrogation of what I call *Middlemarch*'s "architectural imaginary" begins with a study of the Midland's relationship to the rural and the pastoral. This section focuses on the novel's frequent discussion of the picturesque home of the rural worker, the cottage. Following Dorothea Brooke's waning interest in reforming the pastoral ideal and rooting Midland identity in picturesque fantasies, I proceed to study Dorothea's rarely noted interest in a region in which local identity and architecture are closely allied: the industrial north. Dorothea's aborted plan to "found" a factory town manifests a middle-class interest in remodeling the space of working-class life in a region known for its political turbulence. The abandonment of the industrial village as an appropriate location for Dorothea's reforming efforts and her final investment in the Midland hospital mirrors a shift in spatial thought in the decade preceding the novel's composition, as architectural reformers focused on institutional environments. The novel embraces the county hospital as a symbolic charitable site that defines the Midland's discrete identity as a palliative space. Ultimately, I argue that the regionalism espoused in Eliot's novel illustrates that the apolitical regional town is uniquely placed to mediate between northern industrial relations and pastoral fantasies.

I. THE REGIONAL AND THE PROVINCIAL IN THE 1860S

Before moving into the spaces of Eliot's novel it is worthwhile to consider why this novel, "A Tale of Provincial Life," forms a part *Communities of Place*. After all, the novel's subtitle seems to insist that the landscapes describes in the novel are, as John Plotz notes, "defined not by a qualitative difference from the rest of provincial England, but by the mere fact of physical disaggregation (same fields, different places)" (Plotz 76). As this chapter will demonstrate, Eliot's regionalism *is* engaged with describing discrete Midland identity, despite the novel's status as the preeminent provincial novel of the nineteenth-century, which should not be overlooked. I want to suggest that *Middlemarch*'s spatial affiliation—regional or provincial—is best understood within the context of debates in the 1860s on the cultural meaning of the "provincial." Only a cursory glance would suggest that Eliot's novel, like the Barsetshire novels that are the focus of the next chapter, are "metonymic of an England of which readers mainly know that it is neither modern nor London" (Plotz 96). *Middlemarch* is deeply engaged with modernity and spatialization; the novel's title, moreover, engages the regional novel's impulse to record and interpret change, and by so doing achieve an imaginative interpretation of changing ways that makes the novel an apt exploration of Midland society and a summation of Victorian attitudes to modernization.

Matthew Arnold published "The Literary Influence of Academics" as part of his widely read and significant first series of *Essays in Criticism* in 1865. The main thrust of Arnold's essay concerns style: without a clearly identified center of intellectual authority, authors either fail to restrain the idiosyncrasies of their writing, on the one hand, or find

their ideas lacking in intellectual depth, on the other hand. After surveying the power style of Academy-centered French literature, Arnold turns to the national trait stunting England's own literary genius: provinciality.

The less a literature has felt the influence of a supposed center of correct information, correct judgment, correct taste, the more we shall find in it this note of provinciality. I have shown the note of provinciality as caused by remoteness from a center of correct information[.] . . . [T]he note of provinciality from the want of center of correct taste is still more visible, and it is also still more common. ("Literary" 41)

Provinciality, to Arnold, primarily seems to describe a problem of tone that plagues both the form and the content of English intellectual life, and it is in this sense that style speaks to the heart of how culture engages ideas. Style reveals—either in its excess or absence—the modes by which society creates and disseminates knowledge. In other words, Arnold argues that the way we write says a great deal about the relative predominance of genius or intelligence in the culture at large. Where scientific intelligence defines the French academy, a decentralized literary genius characterizes England's intellectual life.

Yet while surveying the lack of style in English literature, the above passage suggests the extent to which Arnold also defines English provinciality. English provincialism, beyond being the hallmark of a lack of style, Arnold writes, has two distinct aspects. The first is primarily geographic: the further the provincial is from the center of "correct information," the further she is removed from access to knowledge. The second is characterological: without familiarity with a center of "correct taste," the English provincial lacks sophistication. Taken together, Arnold paints a grim portrait of the provincial mind, trapped in a small world far from the metropolitan center and unable

to share in universal genius and subjectivity. Arnold's infamous attack on provinciality shifts from the European context to an implied distinction between the city and the rural spaces within England. English provincialism is a stage of culture through which the nation must pass through before "the best and highest intellectual work can be said fairly to begin" ("Literary" 45). However, all is not lost. The cure for England's provinciality, Arnold suggests, lies in the in England's cosmopolitan intellectual metropolis and "center of correct information," London.

Arnold's association of the narrowness of place and the narrowness of intellect sounds a familiar note about city-country relations, and provides a central perspective on nineteenth-century attitudes toward place. However, Arnold's essay is not simply describing geographical difference, rural and metropolitan character. Arnold is expressing an attitude, using a startlingly prejudicial—and acerbic—tone not only to England's nonmetropolitan spaces but, indeed, most of the nation outside of London.

The provincial spirit . . . weeps hysterical tears, and . . . foams at the mouth. So we get the *eruptive* and the *aggressive* manner in literature. [. . .] For, not having the lucidity of a large and centrally placed intelligence, the provincial spirit has not its graciousness; it does not persuade, it makes war; it has not urbanity, the tone of the city, of the center, the tone which always aims at a spiritual and intellectual effect, and not excluding the use of banter, never disjoins banter itself from politeness, from felicity. But the provincial tone is more violent, and seems to aim rather at an effect upon the blood and sense than upon the spirit and intellect; it loves hard-hitting[.] ("Literary" 42)

Arnold's tone transcends the ostensive scope of his essay to sever any connection between provinciality and urbanity. Writing from the culture center, London, and assured of his social authority as a Victorian gentleman, Arnold seemingly has the authority to define cultural value and taste for the nation. Essentially, as Robin Gilmour has argued,

“Arnold’s formulation of Culture as a transcendent value is a crucial development . . . it drove a wedge between regionalism and culture, stigmatizing the one as an enfeebled provincialism, and raising the other above the claims of time and place” (“Literary” 57).² Indeed, the influence of Arnold’s essay is hard to overstate: not only does Arnold define cosmopolitan perspectives on spaces—“provinces”—outside London but he also articulated for regional authors a mode of metropolitan prejudice to write against (particularly for late Victorian novelists such as Thomas Hardy who, writing a generation after Arnold’s influential *Essays in Criticism* was published, forcefully rejected Arnold’s characterization of provinciality³).

George Eliot, however, was composing *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* at the same moment that Arnold was pronouncing his edict on provincialism. Do critics take Eliot’s “provincialism” as a descriptive category too much for granted? By titling her novel in the wake of Arnold’s essay, Eliot was making a strong statement about the

² For a discussion of provincialism that frames the issue through England’s provinciality in Europe in the eighteenth century, see Yadav. For a theoretical overview of provincialism as a problem of colonial-imperial relations, see Chakrabarty.

³ Thomas Hardy objected to the geographical and social divisions Arnold erected between urban and rural environments in England: “I would state that the *geographical limits* of the stage here trodden were not absolutely forced upon the writer by circumstances; he forced them upon himself from judgment. I consider that...that the domestic emotions have throbbed in *Wessex nooks* with as much intensity as in the palaces of Europe. . . So far was I possessed by this idea that I kept *within the frontiers* when it would have been easier to overlap them and give more cosmopolitan features to the narrative. Thus, though the people in most of the novels. . . are dwellers in a province. . . they were meant to be typically and essentially those of any and every place where

Thought's the slave of life, and life time's fool

– beings in whose hearts and minds that which is *apparently local* should be *really universal*” (Hardy 427).

The contrast between London intellectuals and other parts of the nation, or between the rural and the urban, does not define provincialism, here; rather, provincialism describes a local and regional frame of mind and style that reaches to the universal.

English “provincial” novel, which has more concerns in common with the English “regional” novel than with Arnold’s cosmopolitanism. Gilmour notes that critics often “forget[] how daring it was . . . to shift the center of the action away from the dominant London focus of Dickens, Thackeray and the silver-fork or fashionable novelists” (Gilmour 54). *Middlemarch*’s subtitle, ‘A Study of Provincial Life,’ does not suggest marginality; quite the opposite. The title in its entirety suggests centrality—a community in the geographic center of England, “its inhabitants involved in the ferment of the First Reform Bill, which in turn is a provisional stage (a ‘middle march’) in the progress of reform toward the Second reform Bill settlement through which the novel’s first readers had lived” (Gilmour 51).

When I turn to “regionalism” in George Eliot’s work, therefore, I do not speak of the region only in a spatial sense, a description of particular corner on the map of England. I also read Eliot’s regionalism, closely, in the temporal sense: a region of time, which in the case of *Middlemarch* spaces spans a brief period from the late 1820s to the early 1830s and intervenes in the debates about the regional and provincial novel in the 1860s. As noted above, the early- and mid-Victorian periods saw massive changes to urban and rural English life, among them architectural debates spanning the period. The fundamental rhythm of Eliot’s novels comprise a movement between the universalist and regionalist. In *Middlemarch* the two tendencies meet, but not always comfortably. On the one hand, the novel presents the synoptic ambition expressed in its opening sentence, the desire to study the “history of man” as it displays itself under the varying experiments of time (*Middlemarch* 1). On the other hand, the book gives meticulous attention to the accidents and incidents of a Midlands town in nineteenth-century England and her

abiding attraction to local experience, especially the local experience of the English Midlands. It is to articulating that experience that we now turn.⁴

II. ELIOT'S ARCHITECTURAL IMAGINATION

Midway through *Middlemarch*, Dorothea Brooks makes a decision: she will move to Yorkshire and build a “school for industry” (*Middlemarch* 472). Dorothea’s unexpected and often overlooked plan is an important expression of her sustained interest in model working-class environments, but it is also a fundamental demonstration of how Eliot engages with industrial relations in the novel: through architecture rather than through electoral politics. Critics have frequently faulted *Middlemarch* for the slight attention Eliot gives to “railways, cholera, [and] machine-breaking” (Eagleton 120); for the remainder of this chapter, my goal is to enlarge our understanding of the regional novel’s representation of spatial reform by exploring culturally and historically important manifestations of architectural reform in the novel.⁵ Dorothea’s paternalistic architectural

⁴ Karen Chase notes that “[i]t is one sign of the preeminence George Eliot achieved through *Middlemarch* that, when a year after its publication Thomas Hardy began to serialize *Far From the Madding Crowd*, the work was immediately taken for her newest fiction. Then, after the author was known, Hardy could take little cheer: the reviews of the novel complained that it was far too derivative. [...] Certainly it is true that as a “study of provincial life” *Middlemarch* authoritatively confirmed the dignity of literary regionalism that George Eliot had pursued since the beginning of her career and that she successfully established as a counterweight to the metropolis of Dickens. Hardy mocked that George Eliot had not direct knowledge of life in the fields, but it is evident that her monumental study of provincial life gave him a broad highway out of London” (Chase 3).

⁵ As Givner explains, “The head-on collision between literary and historical character in *Middlemarch* is important, for Eliot criticism has long been divided by divergent interpretive tracks, one which runs along the lines of a kind of Lukácsian march of history, and the other which follows the perhaps slower lines of figurative reading” (Givner 224). See also Staten, who argues that recent critical accounts of the novel “find ... that *Middlemarch* colludes with the repressive forces it represents, reflecting the period symptomatically rather than critically” (Staten 991).

interests run the gamut of utopian and pragmatic attempts to reform spaces for the working class in nineteenth-century Britain. Initially, Dorothea plans to (re)construct the pastoral ideal, cottages on her uncle's estate, then thinks to establish the industrial village in Yorkshire, and finally endows the fever hospital in Middlemarch. These sites are lenses through which Eliot sees how distinctive spaces grow, develop, and die away as important cultural locations in the Midland's regions' identity, from the time of the story's setting, 1829 to 1832, to the time of its publication, 1871 to 1872. In shifting focus to a critically overlooked facet of reform in *Middlemarch*, I chart the novel's engagement with sites central to the evolving Victorian middle-class perspective on the reform of built environments from the 1830s to the 1870s, which I am calling the novel's "architectural imaginary." The proleptic architectonics of *Middlemarch*, I argue, reflects Eliot's critique of political conservatism and idealistic concepts of working-class labor and domesticity embedded within Victorian spatial design. Eliot surveys built environments associated with the north and south not only to determine the Midland's spatial position in the nation but also to engage the Midland's historic politics of moderation.

This chapter, then, centers on Dorothea's ostensibly dilettante interest in architecture to show how the novel functions as a historical chronicle of spatial reform during the middle decades of the nineteenth century and how Eliot comes to define the space of Midland modernity. Eliot's representation of Dorothea's progressive architectural imaginary presents a complex chronology that suggests that the anachronistic discourse of architectural reform be read within the novel's own terms and within the historical contexts that bridge the years between its setting and its composition.

My analysis of the phases of Dorothea's architectural imaginary begins with the rural working-class cottage, a space particularly pertinent to architectural reformers in the 1830s. Dorothea's interest in cottage reform is immersed in an unresolved tension between the picturesque cottage, with its nostalgic evocation of a pastoral, peaceful countryside, and the reality of life for agricultural and industrial laborers in these decaying spaces. The abandonment of the cottage and, subsequently, the industrial village, as sites of reform and the turn to the sanitary site of the hospital in the novel mirror the reality of spatial reform in the decades preceding the novel's composition, as architectural reformers shifted their focus to the modern space of the institution rather than the aesthetic or picturesque sites. In moving toward the hospital by way of the industrial village in Yorkshire, the novel shifts out of utopian, pastoral, and theoretical modes to engage in a more practical way with the realities of national life and questions of spatial reform current in the 1870s. The architectural imaginary projected in the representation of these sites is both Dorothea's and a historical cultural imaginary specific to the middle class. By allowing the heroine of her meticulously historicized novel to anticipate future reformist developments, Eliot rejects the notion that the reform of the built environment alone can solve large-scale social problems. Placing *Middlemarch* in the context of architectural texts and controversies, this chapter traces the unique place of the novel in revealing broad shifts in Victorian spatial reform. *Middlemarch*'s architectural imaginary exposes the limits of spatial reform to effect structural political change.

In exposing these limits and examining social ideology through specific types of built environments, I want to finally suggest that Eliot anticipates Michel Foucault's

conception of heterotopian spaces, sites that are, to him, the fundamental symbols of modernity.⁶ Heterotopias are unique sites that demonstrate a society's transcendent ideologies in a physical structure and, consequently, are distinctive from quotidian sites, such as shopping malls, apartment buildings, or grocery stores. Rather, while heterotopias are familiar and penetrable sites, they are also dislocating, "draw[ing] us out of ourselves" to contest our feelings of uncritical habitation (Foucault 23; Johnson 84). In surveying the characteristics of these spaces, Foucault defines various broad categories of heterotopias built by modern societies, two of which, the heterotopias of compensation and of crisis, are integral to my study of *Middlemarch*. Heterotopias of compensation are time-bound sites, "as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy" (Foucault 27). They represent a perfected, hyper-organized environment—the Disneyworlds of modern society. Heterotopias of crisis, on the other hand, are spaces that contain bodies thought to be in a state of deviation or transition. These are sites such as a drug rehabilitation clinic, fixed within a society but marked out as a space for isolation. What links these forms of heterotopias to others is that all heterotopias are "both mythical and real,' [with] specific historical mutations" (Johnson 77).⁷

⁶ Foucault's thoughts on heterotopias were briefly laid out in a radio address delivered in March 1967 and published by the French journal *Architecture, mouvement, continuité* as "Des espaces autres" ["different spaces"] in October 1984. In 1986, an English translation appeared in *Diacritics*, from which my parenthetical quotations derive. For further discussion of heterotopias and modernity, see Casarino, pp. 1–45, and Johnson.

⁷ Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre are two critics whose influence on the field and this dissertation is difficult to overstate. Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* and Foucault's essay, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," have important similarities. Both insist on the necessity of attending to the production and history of the space itself rather than treating it as an abstract form. In their work both Lefebvre and Foucault aim to reorient philosophy towards the lived spaces of the material world and to call attention to the ways in which these spaces shape structures of power and daily life. For Lefebvre, space is a social product that plays a crucial role in the reproduction of the structures of capitalism, and part of the work of

I have invoked the notion of heterotopian spaces because Eliot's novel can be read as contributing to a larger discussion about the historic development of these unique social environments. Dorothea's perspective on social reform is marked by her attempts to construct picturesque cottages and, subsequently, in Foucault's terms, the compensational heterotopia of a planned industrial community and a crisis heterotopia of a fever hospital. The potential ameliorative benefit offered by the industrial town and the fever hospital demonstrate Eliot's historically nuanced understanding of the mediating role these larger administrative and institutional heterotopian sites played in the middle-class attitude toward the working classes.⁸ Dorothea's plans to construct various sites thus become not merely a "favorite *fad*" (*Middlemarch* 24), as Celia claims, but a medium through which the novel explores how the work of architectural reform in

The Production of Space is to uncover the role of space in shaping social relations. While less engaged with questions of economics and capital, Foucault's work on space also focuses on problematizing the assumption that space is static and neutral in order to make visible what he recognizes as the nexus between power, knowledge and space. The work of Lefebvre and Foucault provides the starting point and theoretical scaffolding for much of what scholars have come to call the "spatial turn" in philosophy and cultural studies. The spatial turn is characterized by an attention to the production of space and the role of space in shaping economic and social relations and is in many ways responsible for the interdisciplinary emergence of spatial studies itself. See Edward Soja, "Taking Space Personally" for more on the overlaps in time and space between Foucault and Lefebvre's work.

⁸ The perspective on reform emphasized in my reading intersects with the debates occurring in recent work on nineteenth-century liberalism and its legacies. Amanda Anderson suggests that liberalism is fundamentally characterized by a cultivated "detachment" that holds within it the possibility of beneficial involvement in the collective life of the community, an affirmative reading of liberalism also suggested by Lauren Goodlad and David Wayne Thomas. Elaine Hadley's assertion that the class and ethical implications of liberalism be read with a "hermeneutics of suspicion" (to use Anderson's phrase in discussing Hadley's formulation) sounds an important cautionary note. Though Victorian spatial reformers attempted to improve working-class spaces through a host of infrastructure and architectural improvements, the often paternalistic framing of these projects was steeped in the justifying ideology of the ruling class.

England's regions—and regional literature—is in conversation with contemporary social politics.⁹

III. THE PICTURESQUE COTTAGE

The first phase of *Middlemarch*'s architectural imaginary is signaled not within the pages of the novel but rather on its original front covers. Each of *Middlemarch*'s eight books featured a country scene on its cover, which was, according to Linda Hughes, “added at Eliot’s request [and] suggests the perfect wholeness of art” (Hughes 163–66). Showing a cottage nestled among rolling hills and agricultural figures, the cover illustration situates the cottage at the center of Eliot’s aesthetic and social “study of provincial life.” This visual orchestration of irregular natural beauty and the built environment endorses the familiar sense that the heart of England resides in these generic picturesque scenes (Ross 5, 1, 7).¹⁰ For Uvedale Price, author of *On the Picturesque* (1795), as well as for later theorists of the picturesque, the beautiful country cottage was a fundamental aspect of the picturesque landscape.¹¹ Price embraced the “very singular and striking effects” that thatch on a cottage roof could have on the viewer, even when

⁹ By using the term *architect* to describe Dorothea’s plans, I mean the word, loosely, to refer to one who plans social environments. For more on the relationship between Victorian social structure and the professionalization of architecture in the nineteenth century, see Crinson and Lubbock.

¹⁰ Ruskin identifies the picturesque as an essentially modern aesthetic category in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (Ruskin 251–57).

¹¹ The omnipresence of theories on the picturesque emphasizes its importance as a utopian cultural fantasy in the early nineteenth century. The ubiquity of writings on, and attempts at building, picturesque spaces are too numerous to be noted here; see Ross for a thorough discussion.

“mossy, ragged, and sunk in among the rafters in decay” (qtd. in Ross 19). Looking at descriptions such as these, further into the century, George Ford argues that the cottage was a singularly important site in the Victorian social imagination, a space emblematic of England’s pastoral roots and national aesthetic heritage (Ford 29, 30).

Yet though the cottage played an important role in the construction of the picturesque English heritage, it was also an important site for early nineteenth-century reformers. By placing the reform of the working-class cottage at the beginning of the middle-class perception of spatial reform in *Middlemarch*, Eliot engages a profound cultural split between the emotional investment in the picturesque spaces of the poor and the need to improve them. Unlike the problematic metropolitan environment, decrepit country cottages were structures in which the impact of reform was thought to be immediately felt and appreciated by the working-class community (Sayer 5–6).

The vexed historical, idealistic, and reformist discourses swirling around rural cottage architecture are invoked early in the novel, when Dorothea explains that she “has been examining all the plans of cottages in Loudon’s book, and picked out what seems to be the best things” (21). That Loudon’s “book” should be referenced as an architectural intertext in *Middlemarch* establishes Dorothea’s spatial interests but is also a telling anachronistic moment, as Loudon’s *Encyclopædia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture* was not published until 1834, postdating the initial setting of the novel by five years and pointing to the impact Loudon had on domestic architecture in the

nineteenth century.¹² Loudon, interested in the long-term future of London's green spaces and in large-scale residential projects for people of limited financial means, published the *Encyclopedia*, which, as Loudon's biographer notes, "twas a standby in hundreds of offices, studios, and workshops. 'Let's look it up in Loudon' were familiar words to architects and their assistants, to speculative builders, cabinet-makers, upholsters, and retail furnishers" (Gloag 88). Maintaining a strict awareness of his audience, Loudon argues in *Encyclopædia* that in order for the cottager to be "instruct[ed]... in how to improve his condition," the "middling classes" must "believe that the first step towards this desirable end is, to teach them what to wish for" (Loudon 353, 298).

The necessities, and even comforts of life, are contained in a small compass, and are within the reach of a far greater portion of mankind than is generally imagined. But one room can be used at a time, by either the poor man who has no other, or the rich man who has several . . . that room can only be rendered comfortable by being warm, dry, light, well ventilated, and convenient: qualities which depend not so much upon the materials used in its construction, as on the manner of applying them. (Loudon 8)

Following these dictates, the *Encyclopædia* contains countless designs for cottages that would fulfill these requirements in a working-class home, from a small one-room cottage for a man and wife to elaborate farming cottages for large families. In Loudon's illustrations, the house was designed as a space wherein meanings could be interpreted

¹² Bert G. Hornback suggests that this "reference is probably to Loudon's *Observations on Laying Out Farms...illustrated by forty plates, descriptions of farm buildings, rural improvements, etc.* (1812). A *Manual for cottage gardening, Husbandry, and Agriculture* [sic] (1830), also illustrated with plans and designs, was not yet published as the time of Dorothea's conversation" (21n2). Loudon's 1812 publication, though, does not include cottage plans of the sort that Dorothea intimates she is designing. Rather, *Observations on Laying Out Farms*, as well as most of Loudon's work prior to the 1830s, was directed to an aristocratic audience concerned with improved estate planning and pleasure grounds, not the specifics of cottage reform that was taken up in *Encyclopædia*. The designs that appeared in the 1830 pamphlet *A Manual for the Cottage Husbandry, Gardening, and Architecture* were reproduced in *Encyclopædia*. See Gloag, 24, 88–98.

through the elements on the exterior and interior of the building. Features of the building, such as porches, windows, doors, chimneys, and various ornamentations, acted as architectural signifiers that communicated messages about the building's interior layout. The inside should also be functionally and architecturally congruent, as Dorothea's desire that she not plan "incompatible stairs and fireplaces" implies (*Middlemarch* 51). The balance of ornamentation and practicality in Loudon's cottage plans represents his goal "to improve the dwellings of the great mass of society . . . [and] to create and diffuse among mankind, generally a taste for architectural comforts and beauties" (*Middlemarch* 1).

Dorothea's cottage designs are in line with Loudon's paternalistic middle-class humanism, but her plans include a reconsideration of estate management that reflects a more critical political attitude toward the landlord-tenant relationship than is suggested in *Encyclopædia*. Ironically alluding to the Biblical tale of Lazarus, a beggar who died at the door of a rich man, Dorothea claims that "instead of Lazarus at the gate, we should put the pig-sty cottages outside the park-gate . . . I think we deserve to be beaten out of our beautiful houses with a scourge of small cords—all of us who let tenants live in such sties as we see round us" (*Middlemarch* 21). Dorothea's insistence on the material demonstration of local engagement places the building cottages at the center of the reorganization of the whole estate, as "it is better to spend money in finding out how men can make the most of the land which supports them all, than in keeping dogs and horses only to gallop over it" (*Middlemarch* 11). In dismissing recreation and instead focusing on the landlord's responsibility to leaseholders, Dorothea sees the improvement of the estate as a means of resuscitating the degraded landlord-tenant relationship. While Sir

James worries that cottage rebuilding “is sinking money . . . [because] laborers can never pay rent to make it answer,” Dorothea urges the responsibility of maintaining the cottage as a more successful route to reform than Mr. Brooke’s “muddy political talk” (*Middlemarch* 21, 246). Cottage reform was political reform, to Dorothea and subsequently to Sir James, who remains committed to the “the rectitude of his perseverance in a landlord’s duty” after Dorothea marries (*Middlemarch* 46). For reformers such as Dorothea, politics need a material component to be realistic.¹³ As Bert Hornbeck notes of Eliot’s attitude toward reform in *Middlemarch*, “reform is simple—and quite radical: we must learn to be good and to do good for others” (*Middlemarch* 91).

As I have noted, however, by invoking cottage management in the novel, Eliot engages the debate between cottage reform and picturesque appreciation (Ford 30). These competing visions of the cottage—one emphasizing its traditional place in the English national imagination and the other emphasizing the deplorable living conditions in the cottage—are confronted at Freeman’s End, the home of the Dagley family, who are renters on Mr. Brooke’s estate:

It is true that an observer . . . might have been delighted with this homestead called Freeman’s End: the old houses had dormer-windows in the dark-red roof, two of the chimneys were choked with ivy, the large porch was blocked up with bundles of sticks, and half the windows were closed with grey worm-eaten shutters about which the jasmine-boughs grew in wild luxuriance; the moldering garden wall with hollyhocks peeping over it was a perfect study of highly-mingled subdued colour; and there was an aged goat . . . lying against the open back-kitchen door . . . all these objects under the quiet light of a sky marbled with high clouds

¹³ For discussion of the extent to which philanthropy is offered as a failing solution to the problems of domestic ideology in *Middlemarch*, see Elliott, pp. 189–215.

would have made a sort of picture which we have all paused over . . . in the landscape. (*Middlemarch* 245–46)

This passage describes a standard pastoral scene, yet the narrator's *ekphrastic* description of this "perfect study" mocks the vignette. Subsequently, Dorothea notes that the reality of poverty depicted in Dagley's cottage is not atypical on the Brooke estate: "I used to come from the village with all that dirt and coarse ugliness like a pain within me, and the simpering pictures in the drawing-room seemed to me like a wicked attempt to find delight in what is false" (*Middlemarch* 242). The description of Dagley's farm, which follows Dorothea's invective against the pictures hanging on her uncle's walls, suggests that the narrator endorses Dorothea's efforts.

Yet, while Dorothea's cottage reforms serve a practical purpose, Celia is not alone in dismissing Dorothea's "favorite *fad* to draw plans" (*Middlemarch* 24). As the narrator notes, parenthetically, this was "a kind of work which she delighted in" (*Middlemarch* 8). Later, the narrator satirically notes that Dorothea believes that through "building model cottages . . . it would be as if the spirit of Oberlin had passed over the parishes to make the life of poverty beautiful!" (*Middlemarch* 21). Indeed, Dorothea's own language in speaking of the cottages retains the idiom of the pastoral: "Life in cottages might be happier than ours," Dorothea effuses, "if they were real houses fit for human beings from whom we expect duties and affections" (*Middlemarch* 21). Dorothea's lyrical desire is a part of her initial naïveté, her inability to see how her passion for the cottage—even in an improved form—undermines the manner in which the novel's narrator and most upper-class characters view her and her plans.

The description of Freeman's End emphasizes the picturesque beauty of the cottage simultaneously with the knowledge that it has bad drainage, a poor roof, and dilapidated construction. The vexed appreciation and rejection of the picturesque expressed in the passage highlights the aesthetic regrets middle-class reformers experienced in implementing widespread cottage reform. Even Loudon, while deploring "those fanciful comfortless dwellings which are often erected as ornamental cottages," would "scarcely have the courage to pull down a fine old specimen of a picturesque cottage, unless in a case of extreme necessity" (Loudon 8). Though Dorothea tells Mrs. Cadwallader, "It seems to me we know nothing of our neighbors, unless they are cottagers," the story does not follow Dorothea into the homes of the working poor (*Middlemarch* 203).¹⁴ Remaining on the threshold of the cottage, the novel looks into the condition of poverty from the outside and maintains a strict distinction between the public spectator and the private individual who lives within. Upon surveying the near-perfect hamlet of Lowick, Dorothea briefly mourns over the now departed "possibility, which she would have preferred, of finding that her home would be in a parish which had a larger share of the world's misery, so that she might have had more active duties in it" (*Middlemarch* 50). The gendering of the picturesque language used to discuss Dorothea's plans ultimately decouples her association with their material implementation; as the story progresses, it is Sir James and Garth that ultimately garner the acclaim for the building of new cottages at Freshitt, the Chettam estate.

¹⁴ The narrator's description of Freeman's End and the subsequent conversation between Mr. Brooke and his tenant is held in the garden, a significant site in itself. See Sayer, p. 80.

However, Dorothea's fading association with cottage reform also has historical significance. Eliot's critical stance toward Dorothea's aesthetic architectural imaginary in the novel comes from outside the narrative as story, as well as from the narrator's assessment of the story. For Eliot, writing in the late 1860s, plans such as Dorothea's would have proven problematic not only because of the picturesque language implicit in much of the design of these spaces but also because of the utopian middle-class fantasies embedded in these plans. As Philippa Tristram has noted, there is perhaps no more telling and infamous failure of mid-century cottage-based reform than that associated with Chartism. The working-class land reform movement failed in part because the plans were rooted in middle-class spatial ideals, rather than in actual working-class needs.¹⁵

Initially embraced by Fergus O'Connor and Ernest Jones, in 1842, the land plans designed by radical middle-class Chartist leaders envisioned working-class communities in the country, where, away from the urban environment, families could teach themselves to be self-supporting and to meet the financial requirement for enfranchisement (Miles 52). Addressing the lack of meeting spaces or areas for recreation, the plans emphasized the middle-class values incongruously written into the design of the working-class community: teetotalism, anti-unionism, and hostility to nonconformist churches (Burnett 46–53). Instead, the community was built with ample private spaces for family life and agricultural work, helping to sustain the idea that the interior of the cottage was the hub of the society (Hovell 274–82; Miles 51–54). Annemarie Adams has illustrated how the

¹⁵ See Bronstein, pp. 207–46, for a comparative discussion of how working-class land reform movements in the United States and Britain were treated by the middle-class press.

cottage's layout reflected an idea of the home as a utilitarian space: the three main living spaces were to face the street, while the areas for the less polite domestic labor (the pigsties and washing areas) were placed behind the living spaces, oriented toward the large-scale agricultural labor that would occur behind the cottage. Beyond the front door, one would immediately be in a central kitchen flanked by two rooms, one intended as a sitting room for display and one as a bedroom. In the kitchen were a store-cupboard, a range, and a dresser (Adams 141, 138–40). The minimal bedroom space and the inclusion of a parlor intended for display rather than function are significant aspects of the middle-class design of the cottages.¹⁶

By 1848, five Chartist settlements had been built and quickly filled with “settlers” coming from as far afield as Canterbury, London, and northern manufacturing areas (Hovell 274–82, Miles 52). The experiment seemed doomed to tragedy, as the allotments were small and the new tenants, used to urban employment, were unaccustomed to agricultural work. In 1851, a “Victim of the Chartist Land Scheme” and emigrant from Preston, expressed an increasingly prevalent sentiment about the scheme:

On the 20th of July, 1848, I and my family, seven in number, entered upon O'Connor's “Land of Promise,” called Charterville, at Minster Lovel, in Oxfordshire; but from the cruel treatment we received at the hands of O'Connor for two years and four months, I shall name it “Paradise Lost”.... Yes, I have been so done up that I have begged a raw carrot to eat, and O'Connor knew all about it at the same time; for I wrote several letters to him that I thought would have softened the heart of any man; but they had no effect upon him. (“A Victim”)

¹⁶ See Clark for a larger exploration of the crippling gender and class politics hindering the Chartist movement. Clark argues that the Chartists' egalitarian principles were undermined by their commitment to conventional domesticity.

The communities failed miserably: starvation was widespread and O'Connor was forced out of the scheme's management. The tenants' unclear legal ownership of their cottages exacerbated the scandal, and the status of the property idled in courts for several years (Hovell 290).¹⁷

Failures such as that of the Chartist land plan made it impossible for Dorothea's cottages to be endorsed by Eliot as the appropriate loci for architectural reform. The picturesque cottage, an archetype born in the nineteenth-century utopian imaginary, was an ahistorical ideal. The narrative's ideological and spatial work, then, marks the restructuring of the working-class cottage as a compensatory romance of reform, more for the benefit of the middle-class imagination than as a response to tangible needs. Though the cottage provides Dorothea with an initial means of imagining "what sorts of lives other people lead, and how they take things" within the story, external to the story, the cottage has not proven to be an effective space through which to improve the rural poor's conditions (*Middlemarch* 203). The novel's critical ground shifts as it moves from cottage reform to industrial village and hospital reform, sites implicitly in dialogue not with aesthetic representation and tradition but with modern-day social problems. A significant feature of these heterotopian spaces is their material relation to history: they

¹⁷ Yet even this notorious example of a failed utopian working-class community managed to stir some sense of a lost opportunity in the following decades. Visiting one of the land plans in the 1880s, a reporter for the *Daily News* wrote that the community has a "pleasant diversity about its houses, a certain air of staid placidity, of old-fashioned respectability. ... [The plan] was a bold and brilliant idea, and as I climb the hill overlooking Minster Lovell, and find myself confronted by the ruins of the great scheme, and move about among some of the people there, I cannot help feeling how narrowly it missed becoming a glorious success ... These cottages come very near indeed to the ideal laborer's home, and originally every home had its plot of land. ... 'What was the good of their bringing mechanics, earning two or three pounds a week, from Manchester and Birmingham and Bristol, and putting 'em down here with no knowledge of either framing or gardening?'" ("A Visit to Charterville").

are planned as direct responses to the cultural tensions of a particular time. Dorothea's desire to build heterotopian environments highlights the work of the novel to investigate spaces that attempt to manage the troubling working-class body, a body made particularly problematic in the industrial nineteenth century.¹⁸

IV. INDUSTRIAL UTOPIAS: THE FACTORY TOWN

Dorothea's disillusionment with Casaubon's isolationism accentuates the contemporary salience of her spatial awareness, which is renewed following his death. This lull during her marriage enables an evolution in Dorothea's architectural imaginary, from an aesthetic phase into a heterotopian, industrial phase. Encumbered with her wealth as a widow, Dorothea reasserts her belief that "It is not a sin to make yourself poor in performing experiments for the good of all" (*Middlemarch* 9). Following Casaubon's death, Dorothea travels to the north of England to investigate the possibility of using her wealth to "buy land with and found a village which should be a school of industry" (*Middlemarch* 472). As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, this abortive plan is often overlooked in Eliot criticism, but it signals an important movement in Dorothea's vision of the spatial organization of society, seemingly in complete contradistinction from Dorothea's previous interests. Dorothea is seeking to found a modern, industrial space far

¹⁸ Dorothea's declining interest in idealized spaces and turn to contemporary social problems overlaps with her developing awareness of the debilitating effect of Casaubon's ahistorical understanding of the world. The harbinger of their differing spatial vision comes early in the novel's first book, when Dorothea learns that "Mr. Casaubon apparently did not care about building cottages, and [he] diverted the talk to the extremely narrow accommodation which was to be had in the dwellings of the ancient Egyptians, as if to check a too high standard" (22).

removed from the pastoral setting of the estate. The factory, where “everybody should work,” is disconnected from tradition or history. Yet Dorothea’s rhetoric in describing her village suggests that she does not conceive of the break as a radical one. As she explains to Caleb Garth, “I have delightful plans. I should like to take a great deal of land, and drain it, and make a little colony, where everybody should work, and all the work should be done well. I should know everyone one of the people and be their friend” (*Middlemarch* 340). Dorothea’s “delightful plans” are a new version of the middle-class romance of social relations between the upper-class subject and the working-class other, a continuation of the perspective opened by the introduction of the picturesque into the novel. However, while the picturesque is a site redolent of Victorian utopian fantasies, the industrial village is an in-between site that mediates between the isolated space of the modern factory and a simulacrum of the English village.¹⁹ The vision of a prearranged village represents an ideal of community in which provincial middle-class society could spatially organize working-class difference and identity, which had been confused in larger urban cities.²⁰ Dorothea’s critical perspective on contemporary society and contemporary problems is manifest in her planning of a heterotopian site that is “a space that is other, another real space . . . [not] ill constructed, and jumbled,” but well thought-out and perfected (Foucault 27). It is the critical perspective on contemporary society—simultaneously shaped in opposition to and in dialogue with it—that enables the architect of a heterotopia to claim a distinctive cultural awareness. This standpoint is presentist, a

¹⁹ See Freedgood and Allen for the range of responses provoked by the growth of slums and makeshift housing areas in mid-Victorian cities, particularly London.

²⁰ See Briggs and Sutcliffe.

judgment on the current state of society. It is in her desire to found a space that cannot be mediated by the traditional national mythos that Dorothea's social perspective is implicitly defined.

At the same time, the panoptic organization of this zone of industrial production emphasizes urban middle-class attitudes toward the "care" of the working classes, whose moral and physical welfare were a prevalent point of middle-class social anxiety and capitalist apprehension. As Mary Poovey notes of Edwin Chadwick's *Sanitary Report* (1842), "the outcome of hundreds of firsthand inspections of thousands of poor neighborhoods and homes . . . focused more relentlessly on the details of bodily processes than had any previous government report" (Poovey 36–37). Indeed, this attention to the workers' moral and physical movements is an outgrowth of Adam Smith's insistence that "the expense of the institutions for education and religious instruction" are investments for "those improvements in the productive power of labor" and a necessary burden the middle class must bear in order to ensure that workers could contribute to the wealth of the nation (Smith 1031, 335; Poovey 35). Though Dorothea's plans for an industrial village align with a general social interest in improving working-class spaces, the means through which this awareness was predominantly articulated located the body of the worker, rather than the industrial system, as the problem. Paradoxically, in turning toward industrial reform, Dorothea's plans to "found" a highly organized community around a "school of industry" are the closest she comes to becoming a latter-day Saint Theresa. Implicitly comparing Dorothea to the sixteenth-century nun who established several religious communities in Spain, the narrator notes that Saint Theresa "found her epos in the reform of a religious order" (*Middlemarch* 3).

Through the highly structured community of the convent, Theresa's life was shaped by her commitment to "a national idea," a trajectory Dorothea attempts to follow by building her village not in the mixed rural and industrial Midlands surrounding Middlemarch but in the north of England (*Middlemarch* 3). Both figures are connected, then, through the national scope of their aspirations. Dorothea's "journey . . . into Yorkshire," beyond the middle of England and into the North, takes her into an infamously troubled industrial region. Like Theresa, Dorothea imagines her place in space in tandem with the larger community of the modern nation and rejects the idea that reform should be limited to local needs. Instead, Dorothea's industrial village plans respond to widespread middle-class anxieties about the modern nation and the appropriate loci for spatial reform. In planning to build her "school of industry" in Yorkshire, Dorothea dreams of moving into a region whose industrial excesses and class conflicts made it notorious throughout much of the nineteenth century. In 1830, the conservative labor reformer Richard Oastler proclaimed that "Thousands of our fellow-creatures and fellow-subjects, both male and female, the miserable inhabitants of a *Yorkshire town*, are this very moment existing in a state of slavery, *more horrid* than are the victims of that hellish system—'colonial slavery'" (Oastler 216). From the rise of Luddism in the West Riding, which E.P. Thompson argues initially brought the region to national prominence early in the century, to the region's affiliation with Chartism, Yorkshire's reputation for insurgency was well-established in the nineteenth century (Archer 48). Far into the nineteenth century, the region was characterized as an area dangerously linked to radical working-class politics and harsh industrial working conditions, which is perhaps the reason that Dorothea's

plans eventually “are dispersed among hindrances:” “the risk would be too great” (*Middlemarch* 3, 472).

Yet Dorothea’s plans to found a model society akin to Saint Theresa’s are also blocked by a lack of “social faith and order which could perform the function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul” in her own “epos” (*Middlemarch* 3). Saint Theresa, guided by her “rapturous consciousness of life beyond self,” built cloisters for her church, which connected all of society together (*Middlemarch* 3). Dorothea’s time and architectural imaginary is more earthly, a reaction to the industrial state and the troubling class and social relations that grow out of it. This distinction between their historical eras emphasizes the novel’s critical understanding of the limits of Victorian middle-class spatial imagination, which is formed in isolation from the wider swath of society. Unsupported by a grander “epos,” the narrator decides that Dorothea is a “foundress of nothing” (3). While, however, the narrator reads Dorothea as a failure, Dorothea subverts this judgment: the cottages are built, as is the Middlemarch Hospital. The tension between the narrator’s stance and Dorothea’s actions exposes a rift between the spatial work of the narrative and the development of the heroine. The imaginative genre Eliot writes in allows her to offer individual challenges to the larger arc of social reform that the novel more widely chronicles.

V. PALLIATIVE REGIONALISM

As we have seen, Dorothea’s rhetoric within the novel offers spatial reform as a means of symbolic resolution to the social strife in reform-era Britain, but these attempts

at resolution are continually negated by the hegemonic desires enshrined within them. It is only in the narrative's final representation of Dorothea's architectural imaginary, in which she endows the Middlemarch Hospital, that the novel locates a space for reform in which ameliorative social possibilities can be realized through remediation rather than innovation. This is also the space in which Eliot, caught between the demands of urban and rural societies, locates an appropriately distinctive Midland attitude toward modernity.

Though for Lydgate and Bulstrode, Dorothea's "cheque for a thousand pounds" (*Middlemarch* 474) is a *deus ex machina*, it is consistent with Dorothea's evolving concern for "the health of the poor" (*Middlemarch* 272). Like the industrial village, the fever hospital cares for the working-class body, but the care provided in a hospital is solely intended to treat the body's illness. Dorothea's previous plans for reform had retained a middle-class romance of social relationality, a middle-class belief that the working classes could be assisted and managed through the reform of their domestic or working environment. A hospital, however, does not seek to respond to the troubles of society *in toto*. The fever hospital is a crisis heterotopia, "reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live," in a state of physical transition and change (Foucault 24). Unlike the novel's other sites of management, the fever hospital is embedded within Middlemarch and yet is effectively isolated from it. It is a space where the bodies of the poor are diagnosed and contained, and simultaneously managed by social hierarchical organization.

Reformist arguments about the relationship between environment and morality had, up to the 1860s, been remarkably similar and enduring. In 1844, Engels wrote that in

the courts and cellars of Manchester, “only a physically degenerate race, robbed of all humanity, degraded, reduced morally and physically to bestiality, could feel comfortable and at home” (Engels 75). Even non-reformers use a similar logic. In comparing Manchester unfavorably with Birmingham in 1835, Tocqueville makes a causal link between bad sanitation and bad morality:

At Birmingham almost all the houses are inhabited by one family only; at Manchester a part of the population lives in damp cellars, hot, stinking and unhealthy; thirteen to fifteen individuals in one. At Birmingham this is rare. At Manchester, stagnant puddles, roads paved badly or not at all. Insufficient public lavatories. All that is almost unknown in Birmingham. [. . .] From the look of the inhabitants of Manchester, the working people of Birmingham seem more healthy, better off, more orderly and more moral than those of Manchester. (Tocqueville 104-5)

For Tocqueville, it is precisely because their physical surroundings are better that he finds the people of Birmingham to be “more moral” than their Mancunian counterparts.

In transitioning to a space in which the working-class body in a state of “crisis” is managed, Dorothea’s reform efforts at the site of the Middlemarch Hospital situate her rhetoric of reform in the time of the novel’s composition, linking the arc of her spatial planning to a space consistent with the 1860s and to the Midlands. By midcentury, middle-class architectural reformers had begun treating the effects of crowded housing, poor sanitation, and the seemingly enfeebled body of the modern laborer. Florence Nightingale’s *Notes on Nursing*, published in 1859, asks her middle-class readers to “remember, even with a general decrease of mortality you may often find a race thus degenerating and still oftener a family. You may see poor little feeble washed-out rags, children . . . suffering morally and physically, throughout their useful, degenerate lives” (Nightingale 31–32). Nightingale’s attention to the body of the working poor contributed

to the emergence of a biopolitical rhetoric focused on contamination and the debilitated body of the poor, but Nightingale was exceptional for faulting the environment, rather than the worker, for this “degenerating” decline. “Ill-informed medical men . . . blame . . . ‘current contagions’” on “Providence” (Nightingale 25) rather than the actual source, bad building: “Badly constructed houses do for the healthy what badly constructed hospitals do for the sick . . . bad sanitary, bad architecture, and bad administrative arrangements” (Nightingale 8). Nightingale’s influential campaign to “secur[e] . . . Pure Air, Pure Water, Efficient drainage, Cleanliness, [and] Light” to hospitals for the poor was realized in the establishment of the Metropolitan Asylums Board (MAB) in 1867 (the forerunner to the department of health), which eventually oversaw the building of nine fever hospitals in London (*Nightingale* 24; Currie 174). The MAB mandated that new hospital sites fulfill certain criteria, such as insisting that there be separate wards for separate diseases and that they be built near to population centers but away from urban smog. The hospital should have clearly defined spaces for kitchens and accommodations for medical staff, but the wards themselves should be open and airy (Currie 17–19, 157, 161).

The anachronistic introduction of the fever hospital as the locus around which reform is mainly envisioned in *Middlemarch* is more often connected to Lydgate than Dorothea, but the “stealthy convergence of human lots” indicates that by situating their perspective on reform in tandem in the story, Eliot is commenting on a widespread shift in reform efforts in the treatment and the environment of the working classes (*Middlemarch* 93). In addition to planning a fever hospital with links to the 1860s, Lydgate hopes to see the Middlemarch Hospital as a center of a future clinical institute; this also connects him to medical discoveries beyond the novel’s purview (Green 16–20).

As Lilian Furst notes, Lydgate's insistence that a "new ward" be built "in case of the cholera coming to us," grants Lydgate an interest in isolating cholera victims twenty years before his fellow Middlemarch doctors would have known of cholera as anything but a disease of miasma (*Middlemarch* 395; Furst 77). Located in the Midlands, the hospital is a space where both Lydgate and Dorothea's individual and communal ambitions intersect with an expansive regional community. Dorothea's bequest links her to the aristocratic Lord Medlicote and the solidly middle-class Bulstrode and Lydgate, who together form the nucleus of an upper-class social group who see their investment in the hospital as a local response to national historic changes.

In my historical contextualization of *Middlemarch*'s spatial discourses, I have suggested that political reform is ideologically routed through Dorothea's architectural imaginary, an imaginary with multiple links to specifically middle-class spatial ideals. It is only in the conclusion, though, that Dorothea joins the class with whom her spatial awareness has been in dialogue throughout the novel. In their marriage and subsequent move to London, Dorothea and Will become an exemplary professional bourgeois couple. As J. Hillis Miller writes, "both her marriages upset the conventional economy of marriage and the distribution of property in Middlemarch" ("A Conclusion" 146). Surprising though their marriage is to the community of Middlemarch (and incompatible as it is for many readers), the marriage commits Dorothea to the rise of the middle class and to middle-class ethics of reform.

In keeping with the contradictions of management and amelioration embedded in Dorothea's plans, the denouement is threaded into the discourse of spatial planning. The narrative impetus for Will's return to Middlemarch, which will culminate in marriage, is

potentially to make use of Bulstrode's money, to further "his new interest in plans of colonization" (*Middlemarch* 465):

Will had given a disinterested attention to an intended settlement on a new plan in the Far West, and the need for funds in order to carry out a good design had set him on debating with himself whether it would not be a laudable use to make of his claim on Bulstrode, to urge the application of that money which had been offered to himself as a mean of carrying out a scheme likely to be largely beneficial. (*Middlemarch* 493)

As a plot device, the introduction of colonization plans is an odd inclusion of a topic rarely mentioned among the domestic visions of the novel. Yet Will's interest in building colonies in the "Far West," a plan that would be "largely beneficial," aligns Will's political and spatial interests with Dorothea's. It is toward colonial spaces, perhaps, that Dorothea will direct her future architectural imaginary. As the narrator notes in the conclusion, "many who knew her, thought it a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed into the life of another," suggesting that as Will's interests lead, Dorothea's will follow (*Middlemarch* 513).

My discussion shows the gradual embrace of ameliorative middle-class relations presented in *Middlemarch*, but the final movement toward empire sounds a further troubling note. Rhetorically reminiscent of Dorothea's plans to build a "colony" in Yorkshire, Will's "good design" points to the work spatial discourse enacts for imperialism. The novel discloses the problems of reform in the oblique way that the colony, at home and abroad, surfaces in the narrative. In Yorkshire and in the British Empire, the colony is a space of escape from the unsolvable problems, an elsewhere that compensates for the lack of "faith and order" at home. Yet the northern insurgents, who are circuitously referenced and evaded, are shadows hinting at the potential for revolution

implicit in any colonial “design.” Interpreting Foucault’s example of Jesuit colonies in Brazil as a materialization of a heterotopian space, Peter Johnson notes that in “an enclosure where all features of life are regulated, we find reverberations of the prison and all its precursors” (*Middlemarch* 85). In the industrial village and fever hospital, *Middlemarch* represents the development and decline of significant manifestations of modern heterotopias, variously endorsing or negating their potential to constructively organize society. Through the communal interest in the hospital, upon which the conclusion of the novel depends, the narrative’s work of integrating its multiple plots is dependent upon a culminating endorsement of the middle-class spatial reform ideology. Rather than hermeneutic lacuna, the colonial turn in the conclusion furthers the middle-class architectural imaginary, haunting the work toward social reform.²¹

²¹ This concluding design foreshadows Eliot’s affirmative support of colonial spaces in *Daniel Deronda*, a novel written not long after finishing *Middlemarch*. Only hinted at in *Middlemarch*, in *Daniel Deronda* Eliot will permanently shift the internal English other to the colonies, where “the brightness of Western freedom” will shine “amid the despotisms of the East” (*Daniel Deronda* 535).

CHAPTER THREE

TROLLOPE AND THE HUNT FOR WEST COUNTRY IDENTITY

I have written on very many subjects, and on most of them with pleasure; but on no subject with such delight as that on hunting. I have dragged it into many novels,—into too many no doubt,—but I have always felt myself deprived of a legitimate joy when the nature of the tale has not allowed me a hunting chapter.

—Anthony Trollope, *Autobiography* (1883)

I've never enjoyed what they call the "trill of the hunt"—especially a fox hunt: The unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable.

—Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)

The previous chapters of this project have analyzed modes of imagining regions by emphasizing particular ways of thinking about built structures. Moving forward in time, we have seen how that emphasis has shifted from the progressive to the ameliorative, as one mode after another plays a central role in consolidating and popularizing regional identities, and is then supplanted, though not erased, by newer imaginings and alternative kinds of communities of place. My first and second chapters, then, have explored upon two key themes of this project, middle-class regionalism and architecture. The remaining chapters juxtapose those themes with two further topics crucial to this study of English regionalism, recreation and preservation. Eliot's mid-Victorian conception of the mixed rural and industrial Midland region as a distinctive but

apolitical area finds a corollary in the work of her near contemporary, Anthony Trollope and it is to his work that we now turn.

Next to Eliot's novels, the works of Anthony Trollope, and particularly his Barsetshire series, have long been regarded as the embodiment of mid-Victorian literature. Such an embodiment, in fact, that it is easy to overlook the mythologizing of that society in the novels' wealth of realistic detail. For Trollope, and many of his contemporary and later readers, Barsetshire lived "in my mind—its members of Parliament, and the different hunts which rode over it. I knew all the great lords and their castles, the squires and their parks, the rectors and their churches" (*Autobiography* 154). Indeed, midway through *Framley Parsonage* (1861), the fourth novel in his Barsetshire series, the narrator despairs of his ability to continue to rely upon words alone to realize his English county:¹ "I almost fear that it will become necessary, before this history be complete, to provide a map of Barsetshire for the due explanation of all these localities" (Trollope, *Framley Parsonage* 184).² Trollope's suggestion, that the imaginary county of Barsetshire could be mapped as minutely as a real English county, hints at the degree to which he saw Barsetshire as a simulacrum of life in the southwest of the nation. Successive generations of readers have echoed the author's claim to verisimilitude, and the ability to read his novels as a nearly photographic portrait of an age has been a

¹ All future references to this work will be abbreviated *FP*; references to *Doctor Thorne* will be abbreviated *DT*; and references to *The Last Chronicle of Barset* will be abbreviated *LC*.

² Trollope did, indeed, sketch a map of Barsetshire while composing *Framley Parsonage*, which was eventually published in 1927. Successive Trollopian scholars have produced various detailed topographic guides to the fictional county of Barsetshire, each insisting that "an authoritative map of Barsetshire has long been needed" (Tingay 19).

guiding interest for many. Contemporaries, such as Henry James and Nathaniel Hawthorne endorsed Trollope's "complete appreciation of the usual" (James 537).³ More recent critics, such as Carolyn Dever, Deborah Denenholz Morse, and Laurie Langbauer have shifted the conversation from Trollope's endorsement of everyday life to the ethical implication of his instantiations of realism, exploring the reliability of Trollope as a bellwether of mid-Victorian morality.⁴

Given the persuasive work done to locate Barsetshire physically and ideologically within mid-Victorian culture, it is interesting that comparatively few scholars have focused on the importance of Trollope's influential portrayal of Barstshire as a representative regional community or explored the customs he spatially roots in his southwestern county.⁵ This is despite the fact that one of Trollope's strongest mid-twentieth-century advocates, the novelist and critic Phyllis Bentley, noted that "the idea of a consistent fictitious topography, now the customary convention, the familiar tool, of

³ James's claim is seconded in a much-quoted line from Nathaniel Hawthorne, who thought Trollope's novels seemed "written on the strength of beef and through the inspiration of ale, and just as real as if some giant had hewn a great lump out of the earth and put it under a glass case" (Hawthorne 540).

⁴ Carolyn Dever notes Trollope's formal use of domestic "vulgarity" within the fictional depiction of mundane Victorian life; Deborah Denenholz Morse argues that Trollope was unique in embodying the moral ideal of the gentleman and the honest woman in his fiction; and Laurie Langbauer has located in Trollope's fiction a proto-deconstructionist narrative mode.

⁵ Locating the real Barsetshire is a concern shared by succeeding generations of Trollope critics. Geoffrey Harvey suggests that Barsetshire is a mixture of Hampshire (a county in the southeast, which includes the cathedral city of Winchester) and Wiltshire (a county adjacent to Hampshire in the southwest and which includes the cathedral city of Salisbury). "Barchester therefore is a composite location, a cathedral city of the imagination, inspired by the beauty of Salisbury, and given detailed presence by Trollope's memories of Winchester" (Harvey 10).

every regional novelist, was the invention of Trollope” (Bentley 20).⁶ Trollope is not obviously regional, if we confine the definition of regionalism to the representation of a cooking style, dress, or dialect of a particular area; if, in other words, the definition conforms to Williams’s in “Region and Class in the Novel.” I argue, however, that Trollope is amongst the most important regional authors of the nineteenth century because the relationship between plot and space articulated in his Barsetshire series is consistent with the mode of imaginative spatilization explored in previous chapters of this work. Indeed, the Trollope’s Barsetshire series is perhaps the most influential of all nineteenth-century novels that link the form of the regional novel to an exploration of the nation’s changing relationship to its internal geography. Trollope’s novels, however, mark the emergence of a new mode of bourgeois regionalism that focuses on the landscape rather than the built environment. I’d like to suggest that it is through the guise of landscape preservation and fox-hunting that Trollope advocates for the continued relevance of the region within the shifting political climate of mid-Victorian England.

That Trollope should concentrate on regional plots in the 1850s and 1860s is not surprising.⁷ Trollope, famously, worked for the General Post Office from 1841 to 1866

⁶ Bentley’s work is significant and unique in the criticism of English regionalism. Bentley, unlike Williams or Leavis, was an early adherent of regional literature: “English literature,” she wrote, “is extremely rich in regional novels” (Bentley 7). She argued that British regional fiction saw its golden age with the Brontës’ fascination with the remote moorlands of Yorkshire, an age that witnessed George Eliot’s inquest into the spread of industrialization across the Midlands, and Hardy’s estranged yet reflexive attachment both to rural Dorset and a romanticized Oxford.

⁷ Trollope, of course, wrote and published many of his Barsetshire novels before Eliot published *Middlemarch*. Indeed, Eliot professed as great an admiration for Trollope’s work, as he did for hers, and credited Trollope’s example with helping her to persevere with *Middlemarch*. I have chosen, however, to discuss *Middlemarch* before the Barsetshire series because Eliot’s novel provides a more sustained engagement with the urban issues arising in Mancunian literature and the rural issues that come to the fore in Trollope’s, and then Hardy’s, works. Moreover, as I have shown, Eliot’s novel encompasses a temporal

and began the series while reorganizing the rural posts in southern England, in 1853. The Barsetshire series began with *The Warden*, published 1855, and ended with *The Last Chronicle of Barset* in 1867; in between the short novella that opened the series and the lengthy tome that wrapped it up came *Barchester Towers* (1857), *Doctor Thorne* (1858), *Framley Parsonage* (1860–61), and *The Small House at Allington* (1864). The timing of the novels is significant, for it places them in a period of relative economic and social stability in England's agricultural counties. As Alun Howkins notes, the period from 1850 to 1875 was a time "when rural society and its productive systems entered a state of calm in which the rural order functioned by and large successfully after a period of unrest and economic uncertainty" (Howkins 3). However, to imply that the peaceful life in Trollope's Barsetshire is a mere reflection of his age overlooks the degree to which the novels participated in constructing our perception of a staid mid-Victorian state and placid rural society. Martin Hewitt argues that the relative tranquility of the era was the product of anxious compromises and contests pitting the state against locality, and individualism against collectivism (Hewitt 1-38). In this chapter, I'd like to suggest that Trollope's novels reflect the tensions threatening regional identity, which underpinned the "equipoise" of the age (Burns). Along with previous authors portraying the south of England in fiction, Trollope's decision to locate his county in the southwest of England contributes to the privileging of that region in the cultural imaginary as the seat of traditional English life. Yet unlike Gaskell's *North and South*, whose heroine rejects the

range spanning early-Victorian and mid-Victorian literature, while Trollope's novels are insistently contemporary and focus their attention very much on the 1850 and 1860s.

romantic but sedate society of Hampshire for marriage in Lancashire, Trollope's novels are invested in exploring the outside pressures threatening the seemingly idyllic southwestern landscape.

This chapter, then, explores the intersection between politics of place and leisure in the Barsetshire novels. I shall be focusing on *Doctor Thorne* and *Framley Parsonage* because these novels contain the most developed and considered treatment of Victorian regional identification and attitudes surrounding the impact of hunting and property ownership; however, property issues are referenced in all the novels in the series, and particularly important to the plot of *The Last Chronicle of Barset*, as we shall see. Trollope's assertion of the regional novel's importance in the mid-Victorian era is a response, in large measure, to what he perceives as the encroachment of the national government into the management of the southwest pastoral landscape. Concerns about property management were stimulated in part by the "railway revolution," which transformed access across and through the countryside, but anxiety about the disappearance of regional particularity was further cultivated in the popular press, which helped determine the increasingly prevailing view of regions as provincial backwaters. James Hannay, echoing Matthew Arnold's indictment of provinciality in "The Literary Influence of Academics," expressed an increasingly representative metropolitan view of rural English counties in his 1865 essay for the *Cornhill Magazine*, entitled "Provincialism," offering little confidence that autonomous country communities would survive in the modern state:

The provinces feed London, and London in time will make up to them for what it has taken away. The double action of the railway system . . . draws life to a centre, but it radiates it from the centre . . . as time rolls on,

English life will interpenetrate itself by the action and reaction of different elements . . . it is to be hoped, without destroying the local independence which is one of the bases of our political freedom.” (Hannay 681)

Within the context of this provincializing rhetoric, Trollope’s *Barsetshire* series asks how regional community can remain autonomous and yet be a resource for national identity.

The conception of regionalism developed in the *Barsetshire* series ultimately challenges the view epitomized by Hannay in the 1860s. *Barsetshire* exists as a continually reaffirming independent space. According to Doreen Massey,

What gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus. If one moves in from the satellite towards the globe, holding all those networks of social relations and movements and communications in one’s head, then each ‘place’ can be seen as a particular, unique, point of their intersection. It is, indeed, a meeting place. Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself. (Massey 28)⁸

⁸ I am taking issue, then, with the idea that Trollope’s *Barsetshire* is a “knowable community.” In “The Knowable Community in George Eliot’s Novels” Williams coins the phrase “knowable communities” to describe the distinctive approach of the novel, as a cultural form, in dramatically and forcefully revealing the character and quality of people and their relationships. Tracing the historical development of the novel, Williams observes the increasing difficulty of this task—a challenge confronting not only the novelist but also the whole of society—in the wake of the profound social, economic, and political transformations associated with the Industrial Revolution. Williams notes, “identity and community became more problematic, as a matter of perception and as a matter of valuation, as the scale and complexity of the characteristic social organization increased. . . . The growth of towns and especially cities and a metropolis: the increasing division and complexity of labour; the altered and critical relations between and within social classes: in changes like these any assumption of a knowable community—a whole community, wholly knowable—became harder and harder to sustain. (*Country* 165). The crisis of community and identity that Williams observes in English literature of the 18th and 19th centuries is apparent in a number of contemporary social movements and cultural formations and was part of the oscillation from city to country in English literature that came to define a means of interpreting the country: “The ‘modern world,’ both in its suffering and crucially, in its protest against suffering, is mediated by reference to a lost condition which is better than both and which can place both: a condition imagined out of a landscape and a selective observation and memory . . . A valuing society, the common condition of a knowable community, belong ideally in the past” (*Country* 180). Trollope’s region is not portrayed as a counter discourse to the realities of modern urban life; nor does he argue that the region only be appreciated in the guise of historical fiction. Instead, he brings the past into the very real present, with its reforms, habits, and legislation. To Trollope,

The Barsetshire novels are a series in which the process of place-making and the construction of a regional sense of place are represented as a leading determinant of English identity.⁹ Perhaps more significantly, the sense of place is one in which mobility, movements within the country as well as mobile connections with wider surrounding networks of spaces, is gained and demonstrated through local knowledge of land and heritage. Trollope's representation of Barsetshire through characters and plots firmly attached to their county is driven by his insistence—one shared by Eliot—that the fictional structure of regional novels should be confined to pastoral concerns. Thus, Trollope contends that property ownership in Barsetshire does not produce “possessive individualism,” but rather roots the individual more firmly in the chain of communal responsibility (Goodlad 446). Property issues, which continually crop up in the series, lead not toward economic discussion, but toward the role of civic duty and the ethical responsibility of the landowner to his neighbors.

At a time when the country was being crisscrossed with railway lines, Trollope consistently argues for the expanded reach of county landowners to maintain the southwest's vulnerable and unique place in the national imagination. By means of threatened displacement and disposition, Trollope's novels advance a conservative belief the region's identity can only be sustained through continuing the privileges of the landed property system. Trollope's novels are therefore linked by an interest in getting the

the land is what links the past to the present, and is what did, does, and will articulate a continuing community.

⁹ I use the term “sense of place” here to suggest a shared cultural affinity for a place that is determined by both cultural and natural influences and enhanced by its representation in political and aesthetic discourses.

management of Barsetshire estates into the appropriate hands. More often than not, this means that land in Barsetshire becomes increasingly consolidated under the ownership of a few elite families as the series progresses. Trollope's gentry are cognizant of Barsetshire as a definable geographical entity; ownership is shared amongst a short list of county dignitaries, but the supervision and concern for the land is shared throughout the region.

Though Trollope's advocacy of conservative political and domestic ideology may be so obvious as to render the preceding unnecessary, his representation of the particular regional practice used to sustain this ideology does demand closer study. The Barsetshire novels are overflowing with the coterie language of Victorian hunting. The idioms from which Trollope drew sprang from the burgeoning field of mid-Victorian sporting literature, which freely mixed the realities of hunting—such as 'blank days,' 'checks' (in turn, a day when no foxes are found and the temporary loss of the fox scent)—with an authoritative rhetoric claiming an exceptional place for the sport within English national identity. Trollope uses scenes of hunting and considers the management of the hunting country¹⁰ throughout the series to verify connections to Barsetshire. By examining the spatial affinities in the novels, we can better understand Trollope's vision of the form of the regional novel and use of hunting as a *leitmotif* for the series' complex of regional interrelationships and the values and attitudes that motivate them. Relationships between hunting packs are key instruments in the formation of rural community; care for the country one hunts expresses knowledge of local geography and connections to local

¹⁰ A country is the territory in which a hunting pack may draw, or pursue, a fox.

families. Hunting, for Trollope, is then a means for making and expressing attachment to the physical topography of the land and the community that lives in the space. The gentry's relationship to hunting is valuable to Trollope not because it allows an intimate knowledge of local histories and customs, but because hunting cultivates participation in the rural community. Trollope's regional plot leads to a community of place whose affective ownership of the land is based upon the continual affirmation of tradition.

The sense of rootedness manifested in the Barsetshire series is expressed in gradually more detailed ways. *The Warden* and *Barchester Towers* novels map the interior of the county and the society of the region's urban and ecclesiastical center; *Dr. Thorne*, *The Small House at Allington*, and *Framley Parsonage* explore the machinations of country life in East and West Barsetshire; and *The Last Chronicle* oscillates between the county's center and peripheries.¹¹ The questions that drive the plots—will she marry him? Who will inherit? Will good win out?—are deliberated on through spatial considerations of several types. Through a representative space in each novel (Hiram's Hospital, The Bishop's Palace, Boxall Hill, Chaldicots, the "small house" and Hoggstock), Trollope focuses on a family's ability to maintain property and manage it effectively. At the same time, Trollope makes clear the extent to which these concerns are reshaped by the region's proximity to London. Each book in the series features a local crisis that originates from corrupting urban interloper, crises which are ultimately

¹¹ I will not be suggesting that there is a tautological argument in Trollope's representation of land issues in the Barsetshire series. As Mary Poovey has recently noted, though it is tempting to read the Barsetshire novels as a intentionally crafted whole, such readings overlook the experimental and improvisatory way in which the novels were written (Poovey 31-43).

resolved through machinations of the county's hunting society. It is they who determine who belongs and who must be expelled for the community to remain uniquely Barsestian.

I. THE VULPICIDE PLOT

The temptation to read scenes of hunting in Trollope's novel as mere plot devices is strong. Trollope famously claimed that "nothing has ever been allowed to stand in the way of hunting,—neither the writing of books, nor the work of the Post Office, nor other pleasures" and so it comes as no surprise that hunting frequently emerges as an aspect of character and of plot in his novels (Trollope, *Autobiography* 64).¹² So much of Trollope's writing elevated the social, political, and nationalistic importance of hunting that his name became a kind of shorthand for fictional representations of sport in the mid-Victorian period. On the level of plot, then, there may not seem to be anything particularly noteworthy about the appearance of hunting in *Doctor Thorne* and *Framley Parsonage*. Hunting in *Doctor Thorne* is handled comparatively lightly, as a frame narrative: the head of the Gresham family, Frank Gresham, has been forced to sell his hunting and shooting lands to a local railway magnate, Sir Roger Strachard, but eventually the land is returned to the Gresham family through the marriage of Frank Jr.

¹² A small sample of Trollope's work shows hunting spread throughout: in *The Claverings*, the Reverend Mr. Clavering is forced to give up the sport after Bishop Proudie condemns it as pursuit not suitable for a clergyman. In *Ayala's Angel*, the matchmaking Lady Albury provides the heroine with a riding habit so that she might surrender to the charms of her future husband during the chase. The comedy of *The American Senator* depends on the inability of an American to understand the conventions of English foxhunting. The hunting theme in *Phineas Redux* develops into an entire subplot: the Duke of Omnium's failure to preserve foxes and partridges on his estate for other men in the country to hunt becomes emblematic of his inability to maintain control over his property.

and Sir Roger's heir, Mary Thorne. *Framley Parsonage* develops hunting as a more concerted theme in the novel, but again, hunting seems a device, rather than the central concern, of the novel. The temptation to hunt draws Reverend Mark Robart into fast Barsetshire society and debt, but the *oblige* of Mark's patron Lord Lufton and his marriage to Mark's sister saves the Robart family from ruin. These hunting narratives are secondary, or even tertiary, to the marriage and inheritance plots in the novel. Hunting is used most frequently, it would seem, for its analogical function: the comparison between husband-hunting and fox-hunting is clear enough. As J. Jeffrey Franklin observes, scenes of romance in Trollope's novels are "frequently is cast in terms of a 'sport' or 'game,' paralleling the novel's horse racing and fox hunting themes" (Franklin 906).

I want to argue, though, that the social context for Trollope's depiction of hunting in these novels responded to a cultural shift in the 1850s and 1860s by which the popular portrayal of hunting as an institution of rural English life competed with the dawning analysis of hunting as an archaic pastime, out of touch with modern agricultural communities.¹³ An important aspect of my study, then, is that Trollope uses hunting as a structural trope for the regional novel at a time in which hunting had reached its apex of popularity as a middle-class sport, practiced in the southwest as much as by urban weekenders as by country dwellers. As it reached this popular peak, the mythology supporting hunting culture had already been divorced from reality. The Barsetshire novels therefore respond these issues by considering two related impacts upon small,

¹³ This sense was considerably increased following the agricultural depression that struck much of the United Kingdom in the 1870s. An interested sequel to my argument is Gordon Bigelow's "Trollope and Ireland."

rural country societies: the desire to preserve local relationships between members of the community and the increasing control of outsiders over the landscape. Through the theme of hunting, Trollope portrays the minute and ordinary processes through which the community maintains itself as a body. For Trollope, the representation of fox-hunting does more than record for posterity a gentry pastime; through the description of local environments, use of coterie discourse, and consideration of how the community is accessed, Trollope also explores, in the context of the rural sporting culture, possible definitions of regional modernity. Consequently, though Trollope places “traditional preoccupations with property, inheritance, and marriage within the everyday modern world of the railway and telegraph,” his attempt to preserve hunting as the emblematic activity of regional peoples places them in a sort of suspended animation, as the conflict between geographically-specific values wedded to life in Barsetshire and the peripatetic movements of the characters from one estate to another, and from London to Barchester, develops (Taylor 87). I want to suggest that Trollope’s failure to merge these oppositional movements paradoxically invests modern regional life in an increasingly outdated and nostalgic English pastime and, in so doing, identifies the West County as the playground of the nation.

Before we explore how Trollope determines Barsetshire’s regionalism through *Doctor Thorne* and *Framley Parsonage*, though, I’d like to start by briefly exploring what Barsetshire regionalism is established to be by the end of the series. The *Last Chronicle of Barset*’s concluding representation of the regional community places the responsibility of saving an impoverished perpetual curate, who is a social outsider, in the hands of the entire local society. Drawing together characters and plots from all the

previous Barsetshire novels, the shared interest in determining and eventually rehabilitating Mr. Crawley's character comes to embody the care the regional community has for its members, including the seemingly isolated. The crime of which Mr. Crawley is accused—stealing twenty pounds to pay the butcher bill—is paralleled by a much less prominent, but equally serious, crime of vulpicide. This subplot's focus on the killing of fox outside the purview of the hunt is a reworking of the novel's central ideological argument for social collaboration and regional stewardship. While the Crawley plot constructs the region as an imagined community consolidated by its far-flung members in Barsetshire and in London, Jerusalem, and Venice, the vulpicide plot is only tangentially related to this global paradigm and uses geographical features very differently. The inherent unification of local land management issues and morality in this plot provides a necessary ancillary to the nomadic movement of regional actors across the global stage: in both instances, the masculine representatives of regionalism determine and affirm their relationality by returning to values shaped by care for the land. At the same time, by associating regionalism with hunting, Trollope forms the identity of the regional community through masculine discourse that has little relation to actual sport. The discussion of sport links Barsetshire clergy to the Barsetshire squirearchy and thereby becomes symbolically representative of the common and communal ground for regional identity.

In *The Last Chronicle* the hunting theme is mainly sustained, along with particularly specialized sporting language, by the non-hunting Archdeacon Grantly. Though hunting is not a sport they can participate in with absolute propriety (a subject more fully developed in *Framely Parsonage*), the novel argues that clergymen should

trusted to preserve hunting land and foxes for their hunting neighbors. This preservation ethos is presented as a natural inclination, for though “the archdeacon had never been a hunting man . . . he had lived all his life among gentlemen in a hunting country, and had his own very strong ideas about the trapping of foxes. Foxes first, and pheasants afterwards, had always been the rule with him as to any land of which he himself had the management” (*LC* 328-9). Entirely separate from the archdeacon’s responsibility to the county as a spiritual guardian is his responsibility to ensure the smooth relation between users of the terrain as a landowner. Archdeacon Grantly has “purchased a property in Plumstead, continuous to the glebe-land” that “extended beyond . . . into the neighboring parish of Eiderdown, and which comprised also an outlying farm in the parish of Stogpingum,” and altogether forms a property of “some fifteen hundred acres” (*LC* 327). In other words, his land continues from the property attached to the parish in which Grantly has his living, Plumstead, and into the neighboring parishes further east: the private property he controls smoothly grows beyond Grantly’s home, the surrounding grounds, and the land assigned to Grantly as part of his benefice (“glebe”). Grantly, then, has been slowly accumulating property over the course of the *Barsetshire* series, a fact that he “rejoiced over” (*LC* 327). This transition from a member of the church hierarchy to a member of the regional landowning gentry enlarges Grantly’s relation to the community beyond a care for peripheral communities, mediated through the central religious concerns in the cathedral town of Barchester, to a regional stewardship, the responsibilities of which are determined amongst local interests and by rural activities. In this context, preserving foxes is a secular demonstration of his religious function as a

shepherd of men, as both roles demand a responsibility to tend to and develop the resources of local places and people.

In describing Grantly's relationship to his community as a property owner, Trollope unavoidably slips into a description of the fictive topography of Barsetshire and brings language unique to hunting to the fore. Talking with his woodsman, Mr. Flurry, Grantly is informed that a farmer on the neighboring property of Ullathorne is killing foxes by "a trapping on 'em" (*LC* 328). Flurry "wouldn't speak if I warn't well nigh mortal sure" of this mortal crime, and of the particular offense of killing "a vixen [who] was trapped just across the fields yonder, in Goshall Springs, not later than yesterday morning'" (*LC* 328-9). Aside from Trollope's questionable rendering of dialect, the murder of a female fox in a metal trap is clearly an important enough issue to attract the concern of both gamekeeper and archdeacon, and also to become the basis for determining the relationship between Grantly and his hunting son, Major Grantly. According to the Game Laws, killing a fox was not an illegal act because foxes were categorized as vermin.¹⁴ Without legal protection of foxes for the specific use of hunting, the term 'vulpicide' was coined to define it as a social crime. Though killing foxes might be done for utilitarian purposes (to protect livestock and poultry), the prohibition against trapping, poisoning, or shooting a fox outside of the hunting season or by someone not associated with the hunting community was strong. This Victorian huntingterm punctuates the text and

¹⁴ The Game Act was enacted in 1671 and not repealed until 1831. The harsh penalties for violation of the Act were most strictly enforced in the mid- and late-eighteenth century, a period of mass land enclosure. The Act mandated that country gentry, and their heirs, who owned fisheries, chases or parks had the exclusive right to the sports practiced therein. Because of their assumed partiality for poultry and lambs, foxes, badgers, and otters were designated as "vermin" and exempted from the protection of the 1671 act (Munshe 3-6).

subsumes within it multiple implications: the rhetoric surrounding the disgrace of vulpicide emphasizes it is a hermetically rural concern; it is a concern shared throughout the strongly class-conscious Barsetshire community; and it is a concern which can only be remedied through an intimate knowledge of Barsetshire topography.

As historian Emma Griffin notes, “with so much effort going into the creation of a huntable population of foxes . . . [the animal] had been transformed into a precious commodity” by the early nineteenth century (Griffin 139). Indeed, hunters went to great lengths to ensure a suitably large fox population by trading in foxes imported from other regions (“bagged foxes”), breeding foxes, and designating various no-kill hunts (Griffin 139). Supporting fox populations was a clear sign of local care; it becomes a crucial reason that Grantly is conflicted about rejecting his son, Major Grantly, who gave “what orders he pleased about the game” and had taken “something like the management of the property into his hands” (*LC* 327). That the term “vulpicide” was created, and that the crime grew to be a prominent part of rural morality in the culture at large and within this novel hints at the institutional position fox-hunting played in English country life, but it also suggests the extent to which fox-hunting was an essentially nineteenth-century institution.

The sport and institutionalization of fox-hunting as a part of English country life will be further explored in the next section, but it might be helpful, here, to underscore some important developments in history of play this chapter explores. As was noted in chapter one recreation (such as the Manchester Races) was an increasingly important part of English life, urban and rural in the Victorian period. The social historian James Walvin has pointed out that early nineteenth-century reformers and modern historians are

“generally united in tracing the roots of the recreational changes . . . to the social and economic transformation which had been reshaping the face of the country since the last years of the eighteenth century” (Walvin 3). The complex forces at work reshaping the regional landscapes were not only urbanization and industrialization generally, but more specifically, the enclosure and subsequent privatization of previously common land. Throughout most of century, the wealthy land-owning classes began to successfully appropriate these common lands for private use, that privatization of property forced a divide in leisure activities as well. The historian Hugh Cunningham has argued that, as a corollary development to the enclosures, the upper classes “frowned on and became suspicious of public gatherings of the lower orders for whatever purpose,” and therefore, “privatization of property . . . entailed for all classes a privatization of leisure, privatization in the sense that leisure became class-bound and impenetrable for those outside the class in question” (Cunningham 76). Thus, the lack of appropriate spaces in which to play, to congregate, and to relax, was a “problem of space . . . as much social as geographical” (Cunningham 80). As industry developed and became increasingly dependent upon a disciplined work force with regular habits, leisure habits also began to be more socially disciplined (Malcolmson 98).

The crime of “vulpicide” usefully illustrates this point. The term was not coined until 1826, in the *Sporting Magazine*. This magazine, in which the Charles James Apperley, otherwise “Nimrod,” chronicled and encouraged the surging popularity of fox-hunting in the early nineteenth century, was the most prominent amongst a growing field of periodical literature devoted to sport and was crucial in establishing the mores and behaviors of fox-hunters. By the time Trollope was writing the Barsetshire series in the

1860s, vulpicide was seen by many, particularly those in the middle and upper classes, as a contemptible act.¹⁵ *Punch*, in a 1862 piece on “Foxes Martyrs,” only half-jokingly maintained that only a “mind so destitute of moral senses” could regard “a shocking act of vulpicide,” committed by a “hand that has . . . been stained with vulpine blood,” as anything but a “crime” (“Foxes Martyrs” 168). As Major Grantly succinctly summarizes, “I feel sure that every gentleman who preserves a fox does good to the country” (*LC* 604).

While Grantly’s concern for the local fox population enables him to stand on a shared ethical standing with his son and Flurry, it also allows him to meditate on the values of landowning. Grantly explicitly extends these values beyond the general support for the hunting community to a validation of elite governance. Trollope’s use of the natural environment as the locus through which to assert a conservative political ideology is suggestive of what Nigel Everette has called “the Tory view of landscape,” a view that “dwelt on ethical and aesthetic values without seeking to engage in detail with economic theory” (Everett 6, 207). The links establishing this aesthetic and political chain of thought are forged primarily through the archdeacon’s contemplation on the troubling prospect of Major Grantly’s marriage to Grace Crawley, daughter of the disgraced Mr. Crawley.

But the archdeacon went on thinking, thinking, thinking. He could have heard nothing of his son to stir him more in his favour than this strong evidence of his partiality for foxes. . . . [H]e had prided himself on

¹⁵ Trollope covers over opposing interpretations of fox-hunting, but it is easy to see how, as Raymond Carr points out, the notion of “vulpicide” was “yet another example of the imposition by a powerful rural establishment of the conveniences of its pleasure as a social norm” (Carr, *English Fox Hunting*, 113).

thinking that his son should be a country gentleman, and probably nothing doubting as to the major's active charity and other virtues, was delighted to receive evidence of those tastes which he had ever wished to encourage in his son's character . . . "It is a comfortable feeling to know that you stand on your own ground. Land is about the only thing that can't fly away. And then, you see, land gives so much more than the rent. It gives position and influence and political power, to say nothing about the game." . . . The archdeacon was striving to teach a great lesson to his son when he thus spoke of the pleasure which a man feels when he stands upon his own ground. He was bidding his son to understand how great was the position of an heir to a landed property . . . A man, no doubt, may live at Pau on driblets; may pay his way and drink his bottle of cheap wine, and enjoy life after a fashion while reading Galignani and looking at the mountains. But – as it seemed to the archdeacon – when there was a choice between this kind of thing, and fox-covers at Plumstead, and a seat among the magistrates of Barsetshire, and an establishment full of horses, beeves, swine, carriages, and hayricks, a man brought up as his son had been brought up ought not be very long in choosing. (*LC* 330, 605-6)

Grantly's thoughts deftly move from fox-hunting to local economic, political, and social assets. If he embraces his life as a country gentleman, Major Grantly affirms his relationship to the nation on a local level. As Major Grantly knows, "every word" his father "uttered was meant to have reference to his son's future residence in the county" (*LC* 604). From maintaining a huntable population of foxes, to a firm local knowledge of land, to regional political clout and national social status, the hierarchy of the archdeacon's logic is clear to both reader and son. As Patrick Brantlinger observes, "the ultimate form of wealth for Trollope is not money but land, the main material property possessed by or coterminous with the nation-state" (Brantlinger 171).

Moreover, by using the preservation of foxes and the affection for his son as the basis for an ode to the benefits of the country gentleman's life, Trollope pivots to an illustration of competing types of masculinities. In rejecting his role as an heir to property, Major Grantly simultaneously imperils his membership to what David Skilton

has called an exclusive “social masculinity” and threatens to isolate himself as completely as Mr. Crawley has done (Skilton 134). Though his isolation may not drive him mad, as Crawley’s increasingly seems to do, Major Grantly’s contemplated immigration would deprive him of his identity. He would be dependent upon a continental expatriate journal for news about his own nation (St. Clair, 297). He would be idle. As a country gentleman, on the other hand, the major would not become a stagnate man who contemplates the landscape rather than interacts with it as he does and could continue to do, “hunting a good deal and farming a little, making himself popular in the district, and keeping up the good name of Grantly” (LC 26). Major Grantly’s prospective “position” connects him to his childhood education, through his present management of his father’s property, to his future status in the community. A landed property provides him an encompassing identity throughout his life. At the same time, those benefits are wedded to the contemporary moment. The relevance of fox-hunting to society is rendered as contemporaneously as the newspapers John Eames and Major Grantly exchange on the train.¹⁶

According to Grantly, then, hunting serves a specific end in the context of the larger project of representing and guaranteeing the continuance of the community. Trollope’s representation of fox-hunting echoes that of the archdeacon: fox-hunting is the concern of gentlemen, and allows men to discuss matters of import between themselves.

¹⁶ Trollope gets in a sly advertisement, and a nod to the contemporaneity of the novel, in this scene: “Major Grantly had *The Times*, and John Eames had *The Daily News*, and they exchanged papers. One had the last *Saturday* and the other the last *Spectator*, and they exchanged those also. Both had *The Pall Mall Gazette*, of which enterprising periodical they gradually came to discuss” (LC 270). *The Last Chronicle* was published from December 1866 through July 1867; the *Pall Mall Gazette* began circulation in February 1865 and Trollope was an important early contributor.

Fox-hunting's role in forming the masculine community that defines the region is more explicitly made, though. The gentleman who hunts is removed from the day-to-day, mundane work on the land and yet not as removed from the care of the land as the national aristocracy. Fox-hunting men form a society that mediates between the two poles. The crime of vulpicide is supposedly committed against a fox owned by the archdeacon on land owned by Mr. Thorne (of Ullathorne, "to distinguish them from" the Thornes at the Chaldicote estate), rented by a farmer and overseen by a gamekeeper. The myriad social and legal boundaries transgressed by the killing are complex, but the solution lies in a polite correspondence between the archdeacon and Mr. Thorne. As is Crawley's crime, the fox trapping 'crime' is easily solved. The archdeacon writes to Mr. Thorne, who eventually "confessed the iniquity, had dismissed the murderous gamekeeper, and all was serene" (*LC* 853). Quite apart from enabling communication with his son, then, hunting is the means of forming the homosocial regional community. This community includes the archdeacon and Mr. Thorne, and is further depicted as a sporting scene early in the novel, in which Major Grantly "had been out shooting all day at Chaldicotes, with Dr. Thorne and a party who were staying in the house there . . . Lord Lufton had been there, and young Gresham of Greshamsbury, and Mr. Robarts the clergyman" (*LC* 135). This is not a house-party open to metropolitan visitors; it is comprised of a group of men drawn together by sport, and who use the opportunity to gossip about Mr. Crawley.

Thus, Trollope draws not only on the specialized language and ethics of fox-hunters, but uses the sport as a lens through which to represent the shared masculine discourse that defines the Barsetshire squirearchy. In the novel's end, after Mr. Crawley

has proved innocent of stealing and Grace and the Major are about to marry, this coterie language is opened to Mr. Crawley as a sign of his changed status in the county.

Appropriately after dinner, “the first subject mooted was that of the Plumstead fox” (*LC* 852). Crawley learns “that in these parts the fox is greatly prized, as without a fox to run before the dogs, that scampering over the country is called hunting, and which delights by the quickness and perhaps by the perils of the exercise, is not relished by the riders” (*LC* 855). Though “the wisdom or taste herein displayed by the hunters of the day I say nothing,” Crawley’s inclusion in the community is made manifest in this scene. Access to this specialized masculine discourse helps to negate Crawley’s isolation from the larger community and allows him to join into an intimate knowledge of the county, despite the fact that it is highly unlikely he will ever become, like Mark Robarts, a hunting parson.¹⁷

The trope of hunting is thus used to represent multiple discursive and social means through which regional society defines itself. Yet readers of *The Last Chronicle* will notice that, despite myriad references to hunting throughout the novel, there are not any scenes actually describing a hunt or the killing of a fox. This contradiction, between the representation and the reality of hunting, raises an important issue that will be relevant throughout the subsequent discussion of the Barsetshire novels. As we shall see, the fact that Trollope is writing at the height of the sport’s popularity and at the beginning of the modern campaign against the sport is a key aspects of his concluding representation of hunting in the last Barsetshire novel. Before turning the means by

¹⁷ Skilton argues that scenes such as these in Trollope’s fiction form “modes of inclusivity” in “masculine society” (Skilton 132).

which Trollope reached this concluding connection between hunting and Barsetshire identity, though, a brief look at the historical and discursive construction of hunting will show how it became enshrined in rural Victorian life, and from there, a crucial component in debates about the ethics of English identity.

II. A VIEW OF THE HUNT

Fox-hunting came to be known as the definitive English national sport largely because of the sport's association with Victorian tradition. As the coining of the term *vulpicide* suggested, fox-hunting was a one of many "traditions" invented by Britons from across the social and political strata in the nineteenth century. From Royal Pageantry to the Scottish kilt, Eric Hobsbawm argues that many seemingly ancient aspects of British society were utilized to symbolize historic continuity within national cultures, and thereby endorsed and articulated hegemonic ideology (Hobsbawm 1-15). Yet unlike other pseudo-traditions, seemingly revived from the mists of history to have pertinence to modern Victorian life, the practice of fox-hunting in the nineteenth-century had largely been codified by the beginning of the eighteenth century. The form of Victorian fox-hunting culture had much in common with its early-modern predecessors (Middleton 19-32). The distinctly Victorian twist on these earlier instantiations was the spread of fox-hunting discourse as a central lens through which English national identity was viewed. The discursive power of fox-hunting in Victorian literature was met by the growing popularity of the sport amongst the leisure-seeking upper—and later—middle classes. Trollope's novels are a part of a massive popular literature on the terminology,

techniques, and moral implications of field sports as it was practiced by the English gentry in the nineteenth century. According to David C. Itzkowiz, this mythology of fox-hunting developed into an ahistorical rhetoric which obscured the social problems with the sport and their connection to specific Victorian economic and agricultural concerns. The rituals and relationships embodied in the hunt “came to be looked upon as one of the chief promoters within a country district of unity, stability, harmony, and devotion to traditional, deferential values” (Itzkowiz 1).

Though critics dispute the origin of fox-hunting, most agree that its prevalence in English society and defined rituals are due in the growing fame of the sport in the Romantic era. Itzkowiz and Raymond Carr agree that before the Restoration, hunting after foxes was akin to hunting after other vermin and not a distinctive sport (Itzkowiz 6-71; Carr, *English* 3-11). Refuting this dating, Iris Middleton has traced the supposedly modern techniques of fox-hunting back to its medieval roots in literary and visual culture (Middleton 22-3). However old fox-hunting in England is, its modern form developed “sometime between the 1780s and the 1820s, [and] was very different from older field sports as they had been practiced,” notes Donna Landry (Landry 14). This is due to both the social practices that developed around the sport during this period and to its impact on landscape cultivation.¹⁸ In Romantic-era sporting literature, credit for making fox-hunting fashionable goes to Hugo Meynell. Meynell rented Quorden Hall, a seventeenth-century country estate near the small town of Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, in 1753 and used

¹⁸ Other forms of hunting, such as hare- and stag-hunting continued throughout the eighteenth-century and into the nineteenth, though increasingly rarely.

it to effectively make English fox-hunting famous. The primary reason Meynell became known as the ‘father of foxhunting’ was due to the type of hounds he bred to keep up with the fox (Itzkowiz 8). With faster hounds came faster riders, and thus a more exciting and chic activity. Because these swift dogs could pursue foxes who were fully awake, so the story goes, riders did not have to meet early in the morning to pursue a lethargic fox with slower dogs (the ability to sleep in before hunting is one of the odd but often credited reasons for the popularity of the sport) (Griffin 126-7). Meynell’s model of fox-hunting, which depended on speed, riding agility and endurance, drew adherents from the gentry in London and from other regions, many of whom came for a majority of the season to stay in Melton, Loughborough, and other towns in Leicestershire. As the Midlands counties of Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Rutland grew in eminence as the center of English fox-hunting, the various hunting groups founded during this time in the region became collectively known as the “shire packs.” The shire packs were also known as the most fashionable packs in the country; they were open only to invited member and outspent the rest of the nation on horses and hospitality. The technical, sartorial, and ritualistic aspects of English hunting were codified amongst these packs by 1820s and altered little thereafter (Itzkowiz 10, 3).

As the hunting season made Melton progressively more crowded by the 1780s, hunting aficionados began founding, or reenergizing older hare-hunting and foot-hunting, packs across the nation. The shire packs set the style for fox-hunting throughout the country, but differing landscapes, local customs and admittance into the pack made each hunting community unique (Carr, “Country Sports” 478). The extensive grasslands, rarely broke up by large woods or impassable rivers, are important factors that made

Leicestershire the national center for hunting. Breaks in the grassy fields formed ideal coverts, which are the rough or brush areas in hunting lands in which foxes slept during the day, or hid, before being chased out by hounds at the beginning of the hunt. Raymond Carr notes how the varied implementation of enclosure impacted hunting in different county landscapes:

There is the great divide between the arable east with its slow-going, slow-scenting plough, and the Midland grazing counties and the pastoral west. There is the landscape of High Leicestershire—already in the 1830s the “eye of hunting England”—an open country turned into square grass fields by enclosure; the small fields and deep lanes of Devon; the screes of the Lake District; the downland of Sussex that once gave the Prince Regent his best day’s hunting. In each of these countries hunting will differ. You gallop over grass and jump fences with the Quorn, you clamber up and down coombes, get stuck in bogs and go fast over moortops on Exmoor. (Carr, *English* 3)¹⁹

The character of provincial packs (as all packs outside of the Midland shire counties were known) in England’s rural communities fed the county’s national reputation. Fox-hunting in Surrey became popular amongst businessmen from London, who could hunt on the weekends and return to the city during the week (though it was a “nasty, flinty county,” according to Carr) (Carr, *English* 81). In Yorkshire, fox-hunting was established far earlier than in other parts of the country. Fox-hunting packs there were known for their strange local customs—such as mixing the fox’s liver with beer, or adding the fox’s pads to the punch after the hunt (Carr, *English* 58; Itzkowiz 34). The hunting miners of South Wales were famous for their terriers (Ridley 80). Friedrich

¹⁹ The enclosure movements occurring in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries impacted hunting, particularly in the agricultural counties in the south and middle of England, but hunters did not necessarily oppose the fencing in fields and pasture lands. As late as 1922, George Neville Pingriff nostalgically gossiped that “Before the enclosure of the fields by hedges . . . in those early days an onlooker might often follow the whole of a day’s sport from start to finish with scarcely a single change of his view point” (Carr, *English* 45).

Engles hunted with one of the most aristocratic packs in the country, the Cheshire Hounds.²⁰ Hampshire, one county forming the basis for Barsetshire, had various famous packs, one founded by the Duke of Wellington and another by a farmers' son, and thus had an eminent place in hunting history, despite the fact that Nimrod thought "Hampshire is far from first rate, being for the most part under the plough; and in addition to this disadvantage, the stratum of soil is thin over the larger portion of the country, and consequently unfavorable to scent" (qtd. in Dixon 170). The Leicestershire farmers who joined the Quorn pack, which had been founded by Meynell, were prominent amongst the scarlet-clad aristocratic members of the hunt because of the blue coats they wore (Itzkowiz 32, 34). Less affluent regions were known for their scratch packs, groups who hunted with hounds owned by all the members of the pack, while more elite packs had a Master of Hounds who kenneled and bred the hounds. Fox-hunting was represented differently in various regions, but its common discourse and procedure represented a distinctive national sport.

Myths of pastoral England aside, traditional rural relationships between country gentry and laborers were mediated paternalistically through land and animal welfare. Leonore Davidoff claims hunting as "the activity *par excellence* which brought together local people and those involved in London Society . . . Hunting, too, allowed a limited amount of class mixing in the field: that is local farmers, doctors and similar people could

²⁰ "Cheshire," Engles observed, "abounds with parks, and mansions, and the aristocracy have from time immemorial been most devoted patrons of fox-hunting; indeed there is no county in England where that feeling can prevail more universally among the higher classes" (qtd. in Hunt 204). As did many other advocates of hunting, Engles claimed hunting grounds as "the best school of all" for warfare (qtd. in Hunt 205).

hunt along with the great” (Davidoff 28-9). The sense of equality ostensibly embodied in hunting depended primarily on the inclusion of farmers into the hunt, though the fame of the occasional chimney-sweep or publican who hunted did much to advance a reputation for classlessness in the field.²¹ Farmers were seen as natural fox-hunters who protected their livestock through the sport, but their involvement was due to specific seasonal and legal reasons. Hunting was an appealing leisure sport for farmers because the formal season lasted from late October to late March, months a relative low agricultural activity, and because farmers could participate in the sport without legal repercussions (Landry 11).²²

Whether participating or not, the inclusion of farmers into affluent packs was a necessary part of hunting culture—or at least their approval was needed. The growing popularity of hunting tested the relationship between farmers and landowners “since the legal right to cross other people’s property was never established by fox-hunters . . . the freely granted permission of the occupiers was vital” (Carr, “Country Sports” 479.) Fox-hunting “meant license for fields of galloping horses to crash across land they did not own,” incurring damage to hedges, fences, crops, and livestock as they went (Carr, “Country Sports” 479). In *Observations on Fox-Hunting*, one of the early guidebooks to

²¹ As Itzkowiz notes, a retired coach hunted in Hampshire and a chimney-sweep hunted with the Duke of Beaufort in the 1820s. That these hunters are still known is testament to the rare inclusion of workers. Agricultural and village laborers are almost never considered in panegyrics about the democratic nature of the hunt (Itzkowiz 38).

²² The Game Act was enacted in 1671 and not repealed until 1831. The harsh penalties for violation of the Act were most strictly enforced in the mid- and late-eighteenth century, a period of mass land enclosure. The Act mandated that country gentry, and their heirs, who owned fisheries, chases or parks had the exclusive right to the sports practiced therein. Because of their assumed partiality for poultry and lambs, foxes, badgers, and otters were designated as “vermin” and exempted from the protection of the 1671 act (Munsche, 3-6).

the sport, John Cook advised his readers to “endeavour to gain the good will of *the farmers* . . . if any respectable body of persons suffer from hunting, it is them; and I think it not only ungentlemanly, but impolitic, to treat them in the field, or elsewhere, otherwise than with kindness and civility” (Cook 87). Consideration for farmers, if not for their property, fed into an increasingly hyperbolic notion that hunting “links all classes together, from the Peer to the Peasant” (Hawkes n.p.). The idea that hunting was friendly to participants from all classes and thus was valuable to all classes, was a connection continually made in hunting literature from the Romantic period on.²³ The shared sense of generosity from farmers, who opened their land, and from gentry, who momentarily supposedly ignored the strict laws of social hierarchy, contributed to a sense that hunting was a selfless activity that depended on mutual communal consent to continue. Social events, such as hunt dinners, balls, breakfasts, and assemblies enshrined the hunt as an active force in shaping the character of a local society that was open to all members of the rural community regardless of their participation in the sport (Itzkowiz 104-5). Beyond securing the permission of farmer to hunt across their fields, hunting packs were dependent upon the good will of local landowners to allow them to, in essence, trespass. Provincial packs were mainly organized by local landowners who depended upon their knowledge of the landscape to navigate geographical and social terrain alike. This meant not only knowing how to negotiate the broken, rocky landscape

²³ As late as 1888, despite a growing criticism of the sport, George F. Underhill could still argue that “fox-hunting is the sovereign cure for all troubles and cares. I even do not hesitate to assert that so long as foxhunting endures, so long will all the classes of English society be safe together: the high from the blights of envy and the spoliation of rapacity, the low from the iron hand of oppression and the insolent spurn of contempt” (Underhill vi)

in the Lake District, the chalky hills in Sussex, or the “hard stony country” in Kent, but knowing how to handle local property relationships as well (Itzkowiz 104-5).

The inclusion of farmers and country gentry in hunting packs thus formed an initial and important part of the sport’s facade of egalitarianism, but in reality, of course, the sport did more to enhance privileged society than it did to enhance local relationships. The growing popularity of fox-hunting during an era of nation-building and increasingly intense patriotic fervor was, according to Linda Colley, a “conscious and aggressive effort on the part of the landed elite to assert its status as arbiter and guardian of the national culture” (Itzkowiz 104-5). The discursive representation of fox-hunting as egalitarian, courageous, geographically sensitive, and the quintessential English sport helped define national identity during the Napoleonic wars. Hunting had long been associated with war, and was seen as training ground for the cavalry (Thomas 183). The reputation of hunting had as the singular activity that could train officers to travel through rough land, provide knowledge of military technique, and tolerate harsh conditions, remained in place until World War I. During the Napoleonic, Crimean and Boer wars, officers were often given long leaves during hunting season to improve their skills. Believing they were doing a patriotic act and repaying soldiers for their service, packs regularly invited officers stationed within hunting counties to join them (Itzkowiz 21). Hunting also provided young men entertainment in England at a time then the Napoleonic conflicts on the continent limited travel. In 1788, William Blane encouraged “rural diversions” as “particularly useful in this island, where from the nature of our government, no man can be of consequence without spending a large portion of his time in the country, and every additional inducement to this mode of life is an additional

security to our freedom and independence” (qtd. in Thomas 247). The hunting season mandated that landowners live in rural areas for an extended period, an occupation that encouraged a renewed promotion of the value of English country life and the values of landed society. The escalated discursive role hunting played in defining Englishness during this period was only another turn of the dial promoting aristocratic country life (Carr, *English* 108).

Moreover, landowners were expected to preserve coverts on their land, whether the owner was hunter or not. Donna Landry argues that modern environmental movement has its roots in the conservationist mindset of hunters in this era:

Demonstrations of landlordly power through exercising sporting rights . . . effected environmental conservation. Preserved woodlands and heath, gorse coverts and hedgerows, parkland clumps and belts of trees: all these feature of the rural landscape we take for granted today can be attributed to the mania for field sports. (Landry 71)

This mindset has its roots in the preservation of forests for monarchical use, but like the emparkment movements of the early the seventeenth century, the cultivation of private lands for leisure sport directly interfered with agricultural economies.²⁴ The responsibility to maintain coverts often fell to farmers, but the decision to plant or preserve these places was made by members of the pack and the landowner. Farmers had solid ground for opposing the growth of coverts on their land: each covert preserved land for play, rather than for work; coverts attracted foxes, which could kill livestock; and coverts attracted fox-hunters, who could cause serious damage. So long that hunting packs were composed of local members, the conflict between farmers and landowners was minimized by the

²⁴ See Thompson, pp. 17-54, 31, 45.

rent packs paid to farmers for coverts expenses and the loss of farming land. As hunting became more popular amongst the urban, middle classes, though, farmers were often asked to preserve land for people with whom they had no local connection (Itzkowiz 119).

As fox-hunting became ever more established in literature, landscape, and visual culture in the nineteenth-century, the irony that made Victorian hunting society distinct from its predecessors became apparent: as the bourgeoisie flocked to the sport, hunting packs became more exclusive. In the Victorian period, hunting became a middle-class sport with the patina of aristocratic privilege. As Donna Landry notes, “The biggest difference between hunting in England in 1735 and 1830 might be characterized as the difference between riding in order to hunt . . . and hunting in order to ride” (Landry 173). Showing equestrian skill became the purpose of foxhunting, rather than the means to the end of the hunt. Yet the biggest difference, to paraphrase Landry, from hunting in 1830 to hunting in 1870 might be characterized as the difference between hunting in order to ride to riding in order to socialize. In 1863, writing in *Baily’s Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, “A Gentleman in Black” ironically titled his article to middle-class hunting enthusiasts “The Sport of Kings.” Tongue firmly in cheek, the Gentleman

Hope[s] the readers of ‘Baily’ are not insulted by the introduction of a subject so hackneyed as hunting . . . Yet it ought to be known to the readers of ‘Baily’ that there are hundreds of men in these islands who are able to afford neither time nor money for Scotland nor Baden, but are content to wait patiently for the time which shall bring back the sport in which they indulge. (“The Sport of Kings” 113).

For these middle-class urban hunters, the Gentleman goes on to warn that “Hunting is one of those things which can’t be done cheaply. There is no such thing as economy in

the price of your stud, whatever there may be in the management of your stable; and the man who is compelled to practice it must content himself with some milder sphere of action than the Shires” (“The Sport of Kings” 113). Money, not status, was the essential attribute a hunter needed by the 1860s.²⁵

The rhetoric of fox-hunting, as a vehicle for community, for power, for social cachet, and for identity obscures the degree to which fox-hunting in the Victorian period came to mean business. The surging cost of fox-hunting was driven by a desire to keep a pack in fashion. Beyond costs for keeping hounds and renting coverts, the expenditure to maintain a pack included salaries paid to hunt servants and the cost of their uniforms, the costs for maintaining coverts, the cost of social events hosted during the season, and the compensation paid to farmers for damage to land and livestock. This financial burden of keeping the pack, traditionally the “honor” of the Master of Hounds, more and more became one that families who did not have very deep pockets wanted to take on. The development of subscription packs, in which a handful of subscribers supported the expenses of the hounds, led to a greater formalization of fox-hunting in the early-mid-Victorian period. Not coincidentally, the development of subscription packs paralleled the institutionalization of the weekend and the vacation. This is a familiar story: middle-class Victorians saw in outdoor sports an opportunity for physical exercise, the railway offered new opportunities for recreational travel and increased the range of vacation possibilities at a time when the holiday was becoming a permanent feature of middle-class leisure expectations. Fox-hunters developed a bureaucracy and discourse to meet

²⁵ See Kyle Jones, “Meeting the Costs of the Hunt.”

the needs of the middle-class consumer. The Master of Foxhounds Association was created in 1856, to settle disputes over hunting territories or the right to coverts. Sporting periodicals published guides to hunting etiquette, mandating a the strict prohibition against riding over sown wheat and suggesting that if a rider dismounted to unlock a gate, the rest of the field must wait for him to remount and go through first before following him. The sporting novels of Robert Smith Surtees spawned the cottage literary genre of the hunting novel, which projected the hunt as an emblem of upper-class society. The popularity of this literature ingrained a purely English discourse into the novel more generally, according to Virginia Woolf:

Indeed, the English sporting writers . . . make no mean reading. In their slapdash, gentlemanly way they have ridden their pens as boldly as they have ridden their horses. They have had their effect upon the language. This riding and tumbling, their being blown upon and rained upon and splashed from head to heels with mud, have worked themselves into the very texture of English prose and given it that leap and dash, that stripping of images from flying hedge and tossing tree that distinguishes it not indeed above the French but so emphatically from it. (Woolf 126-7)

III. HUNTING FOR BARSETSHIRE

I have been arguing that the Bassetshire novels, situated within hunting history, provide a crucial novelistic model for regional communities that are the central concern of this study. A closer analysis of these novels allows us to see the extent to which hunting mythology determines the regional plots in the Bassetshire novels. An important part of this analysis, then, is to examine the structure of Trollope's plots—something which would have been anathema to this notably mechanical writer. Trollope called plot

“the most insignificant part of the tale,” secondary to that which makes “the portrait worthy of attention,” the “created personages” who are imbued with realistic traits (*Autobiography* 110). In this context, *Doctor Thorne* seems an important rehearsal for the extended character study and suspension of plot in the *Last Chronicle*: for much of the novel, Mary Thorne remains faithful to her lover, Frank Gresham, who loves her but cannot marry without cutting himself off from his family; the problem is quickly solved when Mary’s mysterious parentage is revealed and she is left a fortune upon the death of her uncle. Trollope’s employment of inheritance and marriage plots is clear. Meanwhile, Mary’s steadfast commitment to Frank is explored in depth as she waits for something to happen in the small village of Greshamsbury. As if to prove that character is of foremost import in the novel, Trollope offers the reader multiple heroes to follow. The narrator initially brings forward the eponymous Dr. Thorne, “the modest country medical practitioner who is to be the chief personage of the following tale” and Miss Mary Thorne as the novel’s heroine, “a point on which no choice whatsoever is left to any one” (*DT* 11, 28). However, should another hero besides Dr. Thorne be needed, the narrator suggests they take “the heir to Greshamsbury in his stead, and call the book, if it so please them, ‘The Loves and Adventures of Francis Newbold Gresham the Younger’” (*DT* 17). Plot may form an interesting story, but it is character, Trollope implies, that sustains the reader’s interest.

That Trollope chose to name his novel after a doctor is noteworthy, then. The title invokes the conflicting curative and self-protective desires often invoked in the novel, yet Dr. Thorne’s most sustained concern is not with the treatment of a patient, but rather the treatment of a property: Boxall Hill. Even more than in the *Last Chronicle*, *Doctor*

Thorne is a novel about the care and ownership of hunting grounds. Though Trollope denies the importance of plot, the characters in *Doctor Thorne* are entirely shaped by their ability to assist or hinder the process leading to the reestablishment of the Gresham family's ownership of their hereditary lands. Dr. Thorne admits that a chief cause of anxiety in his life is seeing the land "melting away, the old family acres that have so long been the heritage of the Greshams" (*DT* 582). Trollope draws from sporting literature a sustained awareness of property considerations, from the right to access land to the preservation of certain local habitats for the benefit of the hunt. More pertinently, though, Trollope is able to extend this desire to care for hunting grounds by drawing on the reader's knowledge of the country estate's literary heritage. By presenting his novel as a modern-day instantiation of traditional English country-house literature, Trollope insists that contemporary industrial life's manipulation of social hierarchy is a distortion of a natural and sacred order, and that it is the gentry's responsibility to restore the threatened relationship between the family, the land, and the representation of the region in the national imagination. By locating hunting within a particular kind of landscape, a pastoral English country estate, Trollope lends the activity a national importance and mobilizes regional resistance to outside infiltration.

The immediate context for Trollope's novel, though, is not its place within literary genres, but rather its place within the Barsetshire series. *Doctor Thorne* is the third novel in the series, and the first one to be set outside wholly outside of Barchester. This change of scene demands, it would seem, a full description of the county for the first time. A Mary Poovey notes, Trollope's authorial presence establishes the "aesthetic self-

consciousness” that is the hallmark of the narrative voice in the text (Poovey 36).

Trollope describes Barsetshire ideologically and geographically as a county

[I]n the west of England not so full of life, indeed, nor so widely spoken of as some of its manufacturing leviathan brethren in the north but which is, nevertheless, very dear to those who know it well. Its green pastures, its waving wheat, its deep and shady and—let us add—dirty lanes, its paths and stiles, its tawny-coloured, well-built rural churches, its avenues of beeches, and frequent Tudor mansions, its constant county hunt, its social graces, and the general air of clanship which pervades it, has made it to its own inhabitants a favoured land of Goshen. It is purely agricultural; agricultural in its produce, agricultural in its poor, and agricultural in its pleasures. (*DT* 11)

Trollope’s description is redolent with traditional pastoral pathos. This is a stock English environment, allowing readers who may or may not have read the preceding volumes in the series immediate access to a shared literary landscape. That this country can be termed pastoral, rather than rural, is due to the glancing reference to the “manufacturing leviathan brethren in the north,” which situates Barsetshire as a space implicitly rejecting the urban and industrial regions in the state. Raymond Williams argues that the dirt along the lanes of Barsetshire is the only fleeting nod to realism in the passage; certainly, the passage has more in common with biblical language than with that of social realism, particularly given the contrast between Old Testament monsters in the north and the land of plenty in the south. At the beginning of the novel, then, the Barsetshire countryside is a seemingly world apart from reality. Trollope seems to reject any hint that modern life has impinged on his idyllic rural setting. This stillness defines Barsetshire, according to Williams, as a place that could be anywhere; the remainder of the novel shows “a social structure with pastoral trimming” (Williams 175). Indeed, Williams has a point: the opening chapter provides the lengthiest, but only, general description given of Barsetshire

in the novels. Entering into the county through the lens of a tourist, Trollope emphasizes the pleasures and aesthetic geography of the space, which imbues the county with the characteristics of idyllic country life while at the same time distancing the space from a specific cultural ownership.

Within this calm and pre-industrial setting, quite apart from the ecclesiastical town at the center of the county which had formerly guided the series toward a theme emphasizing religious and spiritual communities, there are the estates that provide an alternative claim to Barsetshire's fame. These estates hint at the true reality lurking beneath the pastoral picture. As Amanda Gilroy observes "The soothing, encompassing 'green glow' produced by the conjunction of 'England' and 'rural' tends to conceal historical and local differences" (Gilroy xii). The county is unique because of local character; as the narrator notes, "the greatness of Barsetshire depends wholly upon the landed powers," and this novel's focus is on a family noteworthy not for their uniqueness but for their banal position within this group (*DT* 12). Greshamsbury House is "in the purest style of Tudor architecture," Greshamsbury Park is perhaps "not so attractive" but nonetheless "the gardens of Greshamsbury have been celebrated for two centuries," and the Gresham family had a "fine old English fortune" (*DT* 19, 20, 14). Trollope keeps social commentary to a minimum, instead emphasizing the family's history and the estate's key features while excluding any annotations on the working areas of the house. Also elided are the changes to the landscape: the enclosed landscape is presented as natural and not ideologically and materially formed. Rather, the Greshams of Greshamsbury represent the embodiment of continuity within a national rural history. The attachment of the natural world to its owners, and the progressive link from county to

family to estate, situates the novel within the pastoral genre as well as setting. Though Trollope has not yet inserted a shepherd into the scene, the beginning of *Doctor Thorne* typifies a style of writing, as Lawrence Buell observes, which “celebrated the ethos of rurality or nature or wilderness over against an ethos of metropolitanism” (Buell 439). The novel’s echoes of Romanticism are unambiguous. Underpinning this philosophy is the assumption that the specific value of the estate is secondary to its primary role as a national monument, for “the old symbols remained, and may such symbols long remain among us; they are still lovely and fit to be loved” (*DT* 21). The Greshams are Conservative, and Trollope’s endorsement of their politics and heritage espouses what “a point of view opposed to a narrowly commercial conception of life and associated with a romantic sensibility to the ideas of continuity and tradition felt to be embodied in certain kinds of English landscape” (Everett 1).²⁶

In narrative tone and generic affinity, then, *Doctor Thorne* presents itself as an eighteenth-century text, particularly to those reading the novel as “The Loves and Adventures of Francis Newbold Gresham the Younger.” The narrative interventions running throughout the novel are signs of the novel’s homage to Henry Fielding. Like Fielding, Trollope constantly draws attention to the artificiality of the narrative and his professed hackneyed reiteration of the providential plot. Furthermore, *Doctor Thorne* borrows from eighteenth-century fiction a circular structure: the movement from a secure social and physical situation to a period of threatened homelessness and exile, to a

²⁶ After the novel’s appearance in 1858, *Doctor Thorne* became an important text in an intellectual and cultural movement that celebrated “the containment of industrial values” (Wiener 31).

concluding restoration to society and home. However, Trollope's twist on the providential plot is to reorient the nature of the threat to the society's security. What is lost and regained is not the character of a wayward individual but rather the root of the community's security, the estate. *Doctor Thorne* is a novel concerned with the community's ability to maintain itself as a body through historically specific changes; individuals do make decisions, but Frank's flourishing beard or Mary's affinity for donkey rides hardly qualifies as excessive manifestations of individualism. Maybe plot is important, after all.

Before turning to subplots involving a sensational murder, alcoholism, and jilted brides, then, the first signal of future unrest in the quiet East Barsetshire community appears to have come from Parliamentary politics, which have invaded into and upset the timeless operation of Barsetshire estate life. Trollope knits the pastoral into the contemporary world by presenting the Gresham, Scatcherd, and Thorne families as pitifully negotiating domestic and national politics. The Gresham family's initial problems are tied to the passage of the first Reform Bill: opposed by the first Gresham family representative for Barsetshire, John Newbold Gresham, the passage of the Bill meant that when his son, Francis Newbold Gresham, became a MP "early in 1833[he] was only member for East Barsetshire" (*DT* 14). This Mr. Gresham lost his seat, partly through his marriage to Lady Arabella, daughter of the Whig Earl de Courcy, and gradually becomes insolvent because of his wife's urban tastes and his own mismanagement. They lose a series of children and have to sell a piece of their land to a railways magnate, Sir Roger Scatcherd. Again, with curious specificity, Trollope notes "such was the family when, in the year 1854, the eldest son came of age" (*DT* 18).). The

Scatcherds are a foil to the Greshams: though native to Barsetshire, the “great railway contractor” Sir Roger and his son have tastes oriented toward cosmopolitan radicalism; their fortune has been made by the new industrial economy and modern infrastructure (*DT* 92). Sir Roger is, albeit briefly, elected as a Radical MP for East Barsetshire, and Louis Philippe, after his father’s death, returns to Barsetshire solely for recuperation from alcoholism. The Scatcherds’ are figuratively and literally foreign to the social landscape of regional life. The novel denies these characters a sense of national belonging and the rewards of social advancement precisely because of their aggressively outward-oriented political and leisure interests. The final family creating the novel’s ménage “air of clanship” is Mary and Dr. Thorne, who live quietly on the fringes of modernity. Dr. Thorne collects his own fees and mixes his own medicine, but he and Mary both live in close attendance with the grandee Gresham family. Trollope’s Barsetshire families metonymically represent the traditional and modern socioeconomic orders within the nation and their troubled relationship with outside intervention. Trollope’s intent in *Doctor Thorne*, then, is to question how the region is sustained there and now. The banality of the Gresham family, and the clichéd problems of illegitimacy, marriage, and insolvency are what makes them an important representative for narrative attention because they are, specifically, experiencing these problems in 1854.

The custodial mismanagement of a previously protected pastoral space, Boxall Hill, causes misery for family, region, and nation alike. In *The Last Chronicle of Barset*, the protected region provides a comforting image of domestic bliss and isolated community-mindedness; in this novel, the connection between regional stewardship and larger national politics is still strong and has had detrimental effects on the typical and

representative Gresham family's ability to maintain itself. The symbolic burden placed on Boxall Hill, then, is heavy. The land "lay half between Greshamsbury and Barchester, and was known as having the best partridge shooting in the country; as having on it also a celebrated fox cover, Boxall Gorse, held in very high repute by Barsetshire sportsmen" (*DT* 50). Onto this land, Sir Roger has built a "new grand house . . . and grounds, pineries included," "furnished most magnificently" (*DT* 125, 129, 450). The very Englishness of the previously 'natural' landscape is contrasted with the new imperial agricultural structure that covers it: though greenhouses have long made it possible for exotic vegetation to be planted in English gardens, nineteenth-century pineries were almost exclusively built on large aristocratic estates (rebuilt in 1828, the pinery at Chatsworth, home of the Duke of Devonshire, was particularly famous throughout the horticultural world) and housed a particularly expensive and foreign luxury plant, difficult to cultivate and keep warm in the English climate (Beauman 150–71). If the heir to Boxall Hill, 'Louis Philippe, after the King of the French', were a fruit, then, he would be a pineapple: with his foreign accent, "a cross between that of an American trader and an English groom"; his insistence that it is "as cold as winter" in the middle of summer; and his mock-aristocratic air, despite the fact that "there was nothing royal about" him (*DT* 143, 314, 432). Regardless of their new home and membership in Barsetshire society, the Scatcherds are figuratively foreign to the social landscape of regional life. The accepted uses for country lands have been rejected in favour of metropolitan tastes and pseudo-foreign ownership; Boxall Hill's contemporary association with imperialism is so well made as to make actual foreign ownership superfluous.

This being said, the land's previous and lingering importance to the regional community requires more attention to understand why everyone, from the omnipresent Dr. Thorne to the fleetingly-present Farmer Oaklerath, is invested in restoring the property to its original owners. In large part, it is because the family was briefly redeemed from social and communal oblivion through their connection with the hunt. Mr. Gresham père:

was known as an excellent horseman, as a thorough sportsman, as one knowing in dogs . . . he had ridden in the county since he was fifteen, had a fine voice for a view-hallo, knew every hound by name, and could wind a horn with sufficient music for all hunting purposes; moreover, he had come to his property, as was well known through all Barsetshire, with a clear income of fourteen thousand a year. Thus, when some old worn-out master of hounds was run to ground, about a year after Mr. Gresham's last contest for the county, it seemed to all parties to be a pleasant and rational arrangement that the hounds should go to Greshamsbury. Pleasant, indeed, to all except the Lady Arabella; and rational, perhaps, to all except the squire himself. [. . .] The kennels, however, were now again empty. Two years previous to the time at which our story begins, the hounds had been carried off to the seat of some richer sportsman. This was more felt by Mr. Gresham than any other misfortune which he had yet incurred. He had been master of hounds for ten years, and that work he had at any rate done well. The popularity among his neighbours which he had lost as a politician he had regained as a sportsman, and he would fain have remained autocratic in the hunt, had it been possible. But he so remained much longer than he should have done, and at last they went away, not without signs and sounds of visible joy on the part of Lady Arabella. (*DT* 23-4)

The male Greshams' relationship with England's rural past is symbolically congruent with their alliance with the hunting community. By denying that there is a fixed relationship between politics and status in the county, this passage nullifies the political importance of the region. Instead, it suggests that political representation is replaceable with sporting representation. Mr. Gresham's tenuous stature as head of his family would negate the seriousness of this shifted position if elsewhere the novel endorsed regional

representation within a national politics, but it does not. The novel's political subplot pits the laughable Whig candidate Mr. Moffat, derided as a carpetbagging tailor's son from London, against the Radical candidate Sir Roger, who saw in politics "a position in which he could bring his violence to bear" (*DT* 128). National politics are portrayed as a route out of regional relationships. So too is a relationship with London: Mr. Gresham's role as Master of Foxhound is pointedly contrasted with Lady Arabella's metropolitan activities. While Mr. Gresham replaces politics with hunting, Lady Arabella attempts to maintain the family prestige by spending the season in London. This obvious gendering of hunting and fashion aligns femininity with urban culture and implies that women with social pretension—Mrs. Proudie, Lady Arabella, Griselda Grantly—are ignorant outcasts from agrarian pursuits. Hunting, at least in the *Barsetshire* series, is an entirely male domain associated purely with regional landscapes; urban culture, and the politics that are practiced in it, is antithetical to regional masculinity.

The Gresham family motto "Gardez Gresham" hints that the Gresham family has a responsibility to both beware of themselves and to keep home safe. The desire to preserve their historic familial hunting grounds, implicitly presented as a space more generally appreciated, stems not from a sense of obligation to the nation but from the currently felt sense of stewardship by the male descendents of the family. Frank, he is told, must marry money to regain Boxall Hill, and, in the end, this is exactly what he does. As we have seen, the novel's opening chapters juxtapose the ahistorical pastoral landscape with its debased Victorian owners. In describing the prominence Mr. Gresham gains as Master of the Hounds, Trollope is fully steeped within the mythological discourse that epitomized Victorian representations of hunting. A Master of Hounds has

myriad local social responsibilities, to “preside over Farmers’ Dinners, speak at Agricultural Shows, give a substantial prize at the Farmers’ Race, above all get to know his farmers, their families and their problems” (Carr, *English* 135). Beyond these social roles, the master was responsible for the damage caused by all the members of the hunt (Itzkowitz 169). In other words, the master of the hounds was the ideal neighbor—and possibly the bankrupt one as well.

As is suggested in the above passage, however, Trollope’s idealization of the Master of Foxhounds extends beyond their relationship to the local community. Mr. Gresham’s gentleness uniquely qualifies him for the role; his position amongst local sportsmen elevates him further in the eyes of his community; and this elevation provides him with an equal or greater prestige than he had had as a politician. The slippage between politician, master, and autocrat is significant within the novel’s symbolic economy of communal prestige: the position allows Gresham to transcend the transitory national politics that had failed his family and, instead, allows him, fleetingly, to become the model masculine representative of proper regional stewardship. The Master of Hounds also has a transcendent place within the local hierarchy. In *British Sports and Pastimes*, Trollope’s writes, “The Master of the Hunt is indeed an aristocrat, – or rather an emperor on whose shoulder you can always see that the burden of government is weighing heavily; but beneath him there is freedom and equality for all” (Trollope, *British Sports* 76). Part of the “burden” is, as Mr. Gresham’s finances could attest, the economic weight of socially and materially supporting the cost of the hunt, subscription though it may be. The model of aristocratic leader of the pack is, perhaps ironically, necessary for the sport to be, otherwise, democratic: the hunting pack is a metaphor for

the structure of the English state. In the organization of the hunting community, then, Trollope sees the epitome of English conservative governance. Not purely paternalistic, neither is it actually democratic.

Moreover, this “this feeling of out-of-door equality has, we think, spread from the hunting-field through all the relations of country life, creating a freedom of manner and an openness of countenance . . . which do not exist in the intercourse between man and man in cities” (Trollope, *British Sports* 76). The novel’s gradual recuperation of Boxall Hill, within this national and regionally-linked rhetoric, is a search for a home where the local family, and by extension the national community, can recapture the identity it hypothetically enjoyed before the novel’s action began. The importance of the Master of Hounds to the Gresham family identity is thus rooted in the novel’s prehistory, but the relevance of the land to the Gresham’s future role is not.

However, because it is the intent of the novel to return the Gresham family to their estate, it is questionable whether this material basis for their regional importance does paradoxical work within the genre of a regional novel. While I will explore this exclusion more fully in the proceeding discussion of *Framely Parsonage*, what is important to note in *Doctor Thorne* is the suspension from modernity infused in the traditional attitude toward the hunting ground. The pastoral genre that opens the novel morphs into a fable at the end, in a chapter entitled “Our Pet Fox Finds a Tale.” Based on the Æsop story, properly entitled “The Fox Without a Tail,” the fable is of a fox who has lost his tale in a trap and who tries to convince other foxes to get rid of their tails as well—a tail is an bright and awkward to have when a fox is being hunted, and gets in the way of sitting down comfortable—but an older fox points out that the tailless fox would

not be so eager to have others lose their tails if he had not lost his own. The moral is clear enough: distrust selfish advice. But Trollope is not interested in this moral; instead, after discovering that Mary will inherit the Schachard wealth and Boxall Hill, Trollope has Dr. Thorne rewrite the fable's moral to test Mary's generic commitment.

“I wonder how we should either of us bear it if we found ourselves suddenly rich. It would be a great temptation—a sore temptation. I fear, Mary, that when poor people talk disdainfully of money, they often are like your fox, born without a tail. If nature suddenly should give that beast a tail, would he not be prouder of it than all the other foxes in the wood?”

“Well, I suppose he would. That's the very meaning of the story. But how moral you've become all of a sudden at twelve o'clock at night! Instead of being Mrs. Radcliffe, I shall think you're Mr. Æsop.” (*DT* 579)

In the end, then, the issue of inheritance becomes an issue of genre: the fable pivots the regional novel away from the representation of society as an intricate interplay between political and social reality. Instead, Trollope directs the novel toward a tale of the individual's discovery of her own worth in a fable that is independent of any attachment to history (Zafiropoulos 26). Mary is, certainly, not a character in a gothic novel, but neither is she an actor in a completely realist one.

As the novel becomes a didactic tale, then, Mary is commodified not only as a unit of exchange between the Scatcherd and Gresham families but as a unit of exchange between realism and fable. Her value is tied to her ability to correct Bassetshire's failures by placing the story back into the pastoral realm that Victorian social and political reality stole it from. Learning of her sudden inheritance, Mary insists that ‘all that had ever appertained to Greshamsbury should belong to Greshamsbury again; not in perspective, not to her children, or to her children's children, but at once. Frank should be lord of Boxall Hill in his own right’ (*DT* 597). Following on the heels of the chapter “The Race

of Scatcherd Becomes Extinct,” the turn to fable allows Dr Thorne, and Trollope, to show that Mary’s virtue is independent of her immediate position and that she is, therefore, a fit custodian of the estate. Reading very much against the grain, the moral Trollope derives from Æsop’s story of the fox that lost his tail is that one should not begrudge a sudden gift, thereby manipulating the fable to use it as an ideological mechanism legitimizing insular, familial property. Trollope mixes multiple hunting analogies to validate both Mary’s economic ascendance and Frank’s quick appropriation of her newly inherited wealth. “But perhaps there is no tail-seeker more mean,” the narrator sums up, “more sneakingly mean than he who looks out to adorn his bare back with a tail by marriage” (*DT* 579). It is through this second analogical function that the narrator moves Frank into the hunting fable: initially, the narrator confirms the fox’s natural pride but, secondly, suggests the fox should be grateful for a worthy hunter to pursue her. In this fable Mary stands in for the fox and Frank, for the hunter, but this fox wants to be caught so as to reap the rewards of the chase—a somewhat perverse parallel to draw. Unsurprisingly, after the wedding, Frank is approached by “various gentlemen of the county, with reference to the hunt; and the general feeling is said to be that the hounds should go to Boxall Hill” (*DT* 507).

Yet Trollope confusingly mixes multiple hunting analogies to both validate Mary’s economic ascendance and Frank’s quick appropriation of her newly inherited wealth. “But perhaps there is no tail-seeker more mean,” the narrator sums up, “more sneakingly mean than he who looks out to adorn his bare back with a tail by marriage” (*DT* 579). It is through this second analogical function that Trollope is able to introduce Frank into the hunting fable: initially, the narrator assuages the fox’s natural pride, but

secondly suggests the fox should be grateful for a worthy hunter to pursue her. In this fable, Mary stands in for the fox, and Frank for the hunter, but this fox wants to be caught, so as to reap the rewards of the chase—certainly a somewhat perverse parallel to draw from hunting.

The fable provides narrative closure for the novel's less celebrated marriage plot, between the Gresham family and Boxall Hill. The function derived from "Our Pet Fox Finds a Tale" in *Doctor Thorne* is singular from the perspective of Trollope's work more generally, a curious means of narratively involving a female character in the hunting plot. More regularly, Trollope draws a straightforward connection between the marriage market and the hunting chase, with Lizzie Eustace being the premier Trollopian example of an intense fox- and husband-hunter. In *The Eustace Diamonds* (1871), fox-hunting and flirtation go hand-in-hand; the hunt is a staging ground through which Lizzie can court wealthy potential husbands and a pseudo-sexual arena for her to perform in without shame.²⁷ In both of these roles, Lizzie is a realistic stand-in for mid-Victorian female riders and the ease with which she fits into fox-hunting society suggests the increasingly popular and common role hunting played in upwardly-mobile urban middle society. With technological innovations in the side-saddle and in hunting clothing, women were accepted as regular members of packs by the 1870s. Trollope welcomed their presence: "I own that I like to see three or four ladies out in a field," he wrote in *Hunting Sketches*, "and I like it the better if I am happy enough to count one or more of them among my own acquaintances" (Trollope, *Hunting* 31). Mary Thorne is no Lizzie Eustace, though.

²⁷ See Jen Sattaur, pp. 45-48.

Instead of realistically portraying the composition of 1850s hunting society—which increasingly included both women and urban day-tripper such as Trollope himself was—Trollope portrays Barsetshire hunting as a purely male and local matter. Women enter through fable, such as does Mary, or as spectators, as we shall see in *Framely Parsonage*. Active involvement is not an option. “Our Pet That Finds a Tale” represents a small but noteworthy gendered moment within the fox-hunting rhetoric that suffuses the Barsetshire series: a hermetically sealed fable, it offers a prime example of the mythological function of hunting within the novels.

By the novel’s end, then, Trollope orients his region toward political irrelevance and his plot toward a traditional morality tale. Contemporary Victorian politics influences regional peoples enough to provoke an insular mentality. Mary’s admission into the Gresham family produces the social reintegration of the estate, which had been whole until the modern era. Boxall Hill becomes a means to a renewed social cohesiveness; the physical basis for Mary’s inheritance plot serves this larger goal of materially-grounded social order. And it is in Gresham’s relationship to the hunting ground that this social order is epitomized. As we have seen, *The Last Chronicle of Barset* is Trollope’s most regional novel. And though it would be mistaken to see the Barsetshire series as forming a cohesive mediation on regionalism, Trollope’s sustained depiction of this community and their fictive topography does reveal the series’ progressive movement toward greater regional insularity. Turning to *Doctor Thorne* we can see Trollope’s initial move toward linking progressive exclusivity to the regional plot. Trollope’s first novel to be set outside of Barchester, *Doctor Thorne* emphasizes regional identity as a defense position against metropolitan encroachment, but the process through which regional values are asserted

takes the region outside of time and into historical insignificance. His subsequent return to these issues in *Framley Parsonage* brings the region into contemporary life, but further divorces the region from national politics.

IV. AT HOME IN BARSETSHIRE

At first glance, the hunting ground topos in *Framley Parsonage* seems to repeat that in *Doctor Thorne*: preserve land within the family for insular regional purposes. But *Framley Parsonage* raises more complex associations between the natural and the social than had been done in the previous novel. The fourth novel in the series, *Framley Parsonage* was perhaps the most popular of them all. An anonymous reviewer, in 1863, wrote that Trollope “travels with great agility . . . but ever in a region where the million readers of the *Cornhill* find the least difficulty in following him” (“Orley Farm 27). Indeed, when Trollope began the serialization of *Framley Parsonage* in the first issue of the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1860, he returned to a region with which his readers were very familiar. Trollope wrote a story that was, he claimed, “thoroughly English”:

I hurried into the City and had my first interview with [*Cornhill* publisher] Mr. George Smith . . . He wanted an English tale, on English life, with a clerical flavor. On these order I went to work, and framed what I suppose I must call the plot of *Framley Parsonage* . . . [I]n the railway carriage, I wrote the first few pages of that story. I had got into my head an idea of what I meant to write, –a morsel of the biography of an English clergyman who should not be a bad man, but one led into temptation by his own youth and by the unclerical accidents of the life of those around him . . . There was a little fox-hunting and a little tuft-hunting, some Christian virtue and some Christian cant . . . Consequently, they in England who were living, or had lived, the same sort of life, liked *Framley Parsonage*. (Trollope, *Autobiography* 142-3)

Here is Trollope is all his authorial sangfroid, complete with his suspicion of that necessary evil, plot. This description of the novel is interesting not only for the aspects of identity that Trollope attributes to his definition of Englishness, but because he also relates these aspects to the novel's contemporary popularity. This is another connection, albeit a seemingly straightforward one, between Trollope, fiction, hunting, and contemporary culture: enjoyment of his fiction equivalent to appreciating "thorough" English life. On one hand, is hunting; on the other is Christianity; taken together, the novel represents the nation. Trollope smoothes over the problematic aspects in Barsetshire: describing the "tuft-hunting" sycophants alongside the fox-hunters, and the religious "cant" side-by-side with virtue, antagonistic elements in society are raised as mere annoyances in the fiction world.

The account of Trollope imbuing his writing of the novel with the stuff of everyday Victorian life—he explains not only that the novel reflects his readership, but is written on a train as Trollope travels back and forth between his postal service work and the metropolitan center—obscures the more complex adaptation of a canonical English text he performs in *Framley Parsonage*. Trollope's return to Barsetshire sees his fictional affinity with eighteenth-century narrative forms to return, as well. When Trollope mediated a "biography of an English clergyman . . . led into temptation by his own youth and by the unclerical accidents of the life of those around him," he revives the thematic and characterological concerns of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. Trollope's appreciation for Austen's work is somewhat rare amongst mid-Victorian writers, who often acknowledged Scott and Fielding as their major literary forefathers. However, as James Kinkaid notes, in Austen Trollope found a "method and an aesthetic." (Kinkaid 52).

Austen, Trollope wrote in 1869, was “my chief favourite among novelists,” and it is clear they shared an anthropological interest in rural English communities (qtd. in Kincaid 52). Trollope inherited from Austen a fictive technique of integrating real geographic spaces with imaginary locations and using landscape to reflect national character. Alistair Duckworth’s observation, that the typical Austen landscape, with a set “disposition of buildings and landscapes,” is a community that “manifests an organization that has evolved over a long period of time,” is a fitting description of Trollope’s novels as well. So too do his novels share with hers, then, a common fear: “preset security may become total isolation” (Duckworth 2-3).

In *Framley Parsonage*, Trollope explores two models of isolation. He accelerates the danger to the home, a threat lurking beneath the surface of many of Austen’s novels, by granting the clergyman and local squire at the center of the novel, Mark Robarts and Nathaniel Sowerby, everything they could wish for. Rather like Emma Woodhouse, who was “handsome, clever, and rich,” Mark has “so excellent a disposition” that he quickly forms a “close alliance” with an old Barsetshire family, the Lufton’s, enabling him to attend Harrow, attend Oxford, receive the clerical living next to the Lufton home at Framley Court, marry Fanny Monsell, and have a couple of children (*FP* 33). By the age of twenty-five, Mark is happily ensconced in West Barsetshire. Similarly, Sowerby has done little to earn his happy position in society. Sowerby is the Whig MP for West Barsetshire, owner of his inherited family home, Chaldicotes, as well as its surrounding Chase, and is a popular gentleman “of high breeding and good birth” (*FP* 55). Over the course of the novel, Sowerby and Robarts will both be threatened with the loss of their stable place within the Barsetshire community, which is, prominently, rooted physically

in their representative homes, Framley Parsonage and Chaldicotes. As the tale unfolds, in which Trollope exceeds Austen's threat and has Sowerby exiled for mortgaging away his most cherished possession, the motif of estate preservation is once again invoked through scenes of entertainment: though the regional community is finally reestablished in a properly organized space, the relationship between the land-users and estate culture is permanently altered. For Austen, the theatre is the ideal venue for mirroring back to Mansfield society all the corruption within they cannot see. Trollope uses hunting for much the same effect, but his ultimate endorsement of play as a legitimate basis for regional identity crystallizes the emergent mid-Victorian touristic attitude toward the region-as-playing field. Instead of resanctifying the estate through play, Trollope's novel heralds the beginning of a new destination, the estate heritage site.

Though *Mansfield Park* takes brief narrative raids to Bath and Portsmouth, the titular estate centers the discussion of social change within a discursive framework on estate improvements and landscape gardening. The same cannot be said of Trollope's fiction. As one of Trollope's earliest, and most astute, critics, R. H. Hutton observed, "in Miss Austen's world, how little you see of London, even in effect the metropolis has upon the country" (Hutton 188).²⁸ The opened world in Trollope's fiction, Hutton observes, means his characters are "people themselves so far as the circumstances of the day will allow them to be themselves, but very often are much distorted from their most natural selves" (Hutton 188). If character and estate share the distinction of being

²⁸ This point is seconded by David Skilton, who observes "A comparison with MP . . . reveals a crucial difference in narrative stance. Jane Austen's narrator is more intelligent and more knowing than her characters, but is not herself part of the dangerous London world" (Skilton, "Introduction" *FP* 19).

influential and mutable aspects of Trollope's fiction, they are also linked in another important, way: bankruptcy. The major trope running throughout scenes of residential description in *Framley Parsonage* is the acknowledgement that these communities of place are representative of national institutions, the church and the Parliament, and that both communities and institutions are imperiled by mismanagement. Sowerby "was one whose intimacy few young men would wish to reject," but was nevertheless "a dangerous man" because he "was head over ears in debt" (*FP* 55, 56). Robarts, though he knew himself not to be "the paragon which his mother thought him," did not have self-awareness enough to realize that, for him, "ambition is a great vice" (*FP* 37, 66). Robarts agrees to honor one, and then another, of Sowerby's debts, which Sowerby cannot repay; at the last moment, Robarts is saved by the intervention of Lady Lufton. For both men, the downfall is linked to London—to moneylenders and political appointments—but the reality of their troubles is only truly felt at their homes in Barsetshire.

Knowing that Trollope's and Austen's similar pastoral environments have conflicting relationships to urban spaces is helpful when analyzing the estates typifying their landscapes. Framely "was a pleasant county place . . . village there was none," apart from a shoe-maker, grocer's shop, and schools (*FP* 43). There was Framley Church, standing "immediately opposite to the chief entrance to Framley Court," and "just beyond the turn was the vicarage" (*FP* 43, 44). The nearness of the vicarage, Church, and house is a common aspect of the eighteenth-century estate layout and the detailed design of the house and Church "emphasizes the interdependence of clerical and landed orders" (Duckworth 50). Lady Lufton, Trollope's "spiritual ally," is the picture of regional noblesse: she "lived in a free and open-handed style" and "had always regarded hunting

as a proper pursuit for a country gentleman (Kucich 603). It was, indeed, in her eyes one of the peculiar institutions of country life in England, and it may be almost said that she looked upon the Barsetshire Hunt as something sacred. Lord Lufton, her son, is less celebrated. “He jeers and sneers at the old county doings” and was not a symbol of “the old agricultural virtue in all its purity.” It is a sign of his “backsliding” that Lord Lufton had “a string of horses in Leicestershire—much to the disgust of the county gentry around him, who held that their own hunting was as good as any that England could afford” (*FP* 42).

This sign of mixed allegiances in the heir to Framley Court hints at the troubles confronting Barsetshire country house culture. Coupled to the familial descriptions about the estate are elements that suggest that the discourse and meanings constructed through and about the country house culture are unstable, and are in the process of change and renegotiation. The clearest sign of this instability is Lord Lufton’s own financial dealings with urban moneylenders, but the location of his sport is equally problematic. Lord Lufton’s hunting in Leicestershire, his shooting in Scotland, and his fishing in Sweden all orient him to an unmoored leisure society away from his familial roots and local responsibilities. Yet Lady Lufton is also, unconsciously, encouraging this misplaced identification by promoting his marriage to Griselda Grantly. Unlike Mary Thorne, (or indeed any of the marriage plots in the Barset series) who has never been a part of this national market, Griselda Grantly’s marriage plot—to Lufton or to Dumbello—is routed through urban social networks, not regional ones, and thus fail to reaffirm regionality. Griselda is the epitome of a marriageable commodity to be traded on a national market: she is wealthy, beautiful, of good family, and devoid of personality. Her lack of affect

and moral relativity signals her estrangement from traditional modes of pastoral care, a point which is eventually made clear through her marriage to Lord Dumbello, a member of “another set . . . connected, as we have heard before, with the Omnium interest— ‘those horrid Gatherum people’” (*FP* 154). Both Lady Lufton and Lord Lufton have desires that would drive their family away from local connections.

The limited regional community represented in the novels suggests Trollope’s desire to resist the loss of control over his narrative space, and therefore mediates the expansion of the community through the isolated figure of the marriageable orphan. *Doctor Thorne* epitomized the region’s resistance to integrating outcasts into the community, and *Framley Parsonage* testifies to the autonomous strength of the regional community even outside of the region: the fact that Mrs. Granelly and Mrs. Proudie “were quite friendly in London; though down in their own neighbourhood they waged a war so internecine in its nature” affirms the cohesiveness and bounded scope of social relations (*FP* 220). The parallel marriages of Miss Dunstable, heiress and orphan, to Dr. Thorne, and Lucy, orphan and penniless, to Lord Lufton familiarize and domesticate outsiders. Their interventions in the region are palliative and affirmative, functioning to validate the regionally bounded community. Toward this end, Lucy is, like Fanny Price, the ironic heroine of the novel. Hinging her acceptance of Lord Lufton on Lady Lufton’s marriage proposal, Lucy makes her future position as member of the estate dependent upon the agreement between the past and future trustees of the estate. Her position as a proper moral steward is signaled through her nurturing: she exemplifies the country house patron’s commitment to local care. By her work, Lucy instructs the community, from her wayward brother to her ignorant future mother-in-law, about the sins of ambition. As

John Kucich notes, “Trollope’s moral categories thus intersect his symbolic adjustment of class categories by conceiving social identity partly in terms of desire rather than official rank” (Kucich 603). Trollope routes the integration of bourgeois and gentry interests through the curative lens of paternalistic philanthropy.

The text’s doubled exploration of regional cohesion thus turns the issue of care on its head: Lucy is brought in to correct what the regional community alone cannot. In this reversed search for local caretakers, the true threat comes from the ultimate insider, Sowerby, and the corruption of one who was invited to be a part of the community, Robarts. While there is a similarity in the men’s situations, there is a difference of moral importance between the two, a difference that is mainly rooted in their associated spaces. Robarts’s potential loss of home exposes the social fissures within the traditional estate; though close by, the parsonage and the country house have been endangered by their keepers. Looking more closely at the representation of temptation in the novel, though, problematizes the tropes of communal decline and reformation symbolized in the renewed commitment between Framley Court and Framley Parsonage offered in the novel’s conclusion. In the novel’s parallel estate plot, Chaldicotes is mobilized in order to explore the region’s ability to resolve a crisis of its own identity.

What, then, is the danger posed by Sowerby’s mortgaging of Chaldicotes?

Chaldicotes is a house of much more pretension than Framley Court. Indeed, if one looks at the ancient marks about it, rather than those of the present day, it is a place of very considerable pretension. There is an old forest, not altogether belonging to the property, but attached to it, called the Chase of Chaldicotes. A portion of this forest comes up close behind the mansion, and of itself gives a character and celebrity to the place. The Chase of Chaldicotes – the greatest part of it, at least – is, as all the world knows, Crown property, and now, in these utilitarian days, is to be deforested. In former times it was a great forest, stretching half across the

country, almost as far as Siverbridge; and there are bits of it, here and there, still to be seen at intervals throughout the whole distance; but the larger remaining portion, consisting of aged hollow oaks, centuries old, and wide-spreading withered beeches, stands in the two parishes of Chaldicotes and Uffley. People still come from afar to see the oaks of Chaldicotes, and to hear their feet rustle among the thick autumn leaves. But they will soon come no longer. The giants of the past ages are to give way to wheat and turnips; a ruthless Chancellor of the Exchequer, disregarding old associations and rural beauty, requires money returns from the lands; and the Chase of Chaldicotes is to vanish from the earth's surface . . . Some part of it, however, is the private property of Mr. Sowerby, who hitherto, through all his pecuniary distresses, has managed to save from the axe and the auction-mart that portion of his paternal heritage . . . The Sowerbys, for many generations, have been rangers of the Chase of Chaldicotes, thus having almost as wide an authority over the Crown forest as over their own. But now all this is to cease, for the forest will be disforested. (*FP* 53)

It is worth quoting this scene at length because of the Chase's symbolic importance to the moral and spatial environment of the novel. As with the opening of *Doctor Thorne*, a narrative about shifting social relations within Barsetshire begins with a narrative of a prominent country estate in the region. Trollope's initial turn to the forest, before his subsequent turn to the country house itself, emphasizes how significantly his concern for the people that live there is linked to the wellbeing of the natural landscape. Unlike the great grasslands of the Midland shires, the old landscape of Barsetshire apparently is an example of an unplanned countryside.²⁹ However, what now appears unplanned is probably not be so; the land simply is not "planned" according to current fashions. As Tom Williamson and Liz Bellamy point out, "in the post-revolutionary decades, tree-planting was represented as a patriotic duty by the great landowners . . . Some planted for profit, some for sport, and some for aesthetic reasons and it was a combination of these

²⁹ Oliver Rackham terms this sort of landscape an Ancient, rather than a Planned, Countryside.

factors which led to the majority of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century plantings” (Williamson and Bellamy 192-3). Whatever value the Chase of Chaldicotes originally had, the space is here represented as “ancient,” an emblem of organic care.

This symbol is naturally strengthened by the traditional English hardwoods planted in the Chase, oaks and beeches. These trees both represent ancient Englishness and take a long time to grow; their owners are not in need of quick-growing trees to produce quick money. To Trollope, these are Tory trees; the Whig approach to land management supposedly leaves little “left to nature, accident, or discretion” (Everett 39). The characters within Trollope’s novels show their political attitudes through in myriad ways—including in their attitude toward trees. The Duke of Omnium congratulates Frank Gresham on the “very fine, magnificent” exotic plant species at Boxall Hill (*FP* 121). Frank replies that he’d “sooner have one full-grown oak standing in its pride alone . . . than all the exotics in the world” (*FP* 121). As to the planned deforestation of Chaldicotes Chase, Frank is sure none “but a Whig government would do it” (*FP* 121). In Trollope’s novels, the interests of private property are blurred with the rhetoric of landscape gardening to connect the characteristics of English naturalism to English nationalism: both are champion natives against foreign “species.”

According to Trollope, the English stewardship of the park, shared between the Crown and the Sowerby family, is a demonstration of a continuous historical management of the woodland. John Barrell argues that the arrangement of landscapes such as these reveals the ideology by which the gentry justified their claim to govern, a point effectively made by the close relationship between political and landscape supervision at Chaldicotes (Barrell 22). The political function of the Chase is maintained,

then, by the inherited familial role of the Ranger, a keeper of a Royal Park. Yet Trollope quickly moves between pastoral, preservationist, and familial approbation, covering over the political implications of the Chase's maintenance. In so doing, he links the identity of the region to the cultural experience of the space, routed through its ecological environment, and draws a seemingly naturalized link between modernity and the threatened loss of England's rural heritage.

This is a heritage, it would seem, that could be preserved through sightseeing, if the intrusive government would leave well enough alone. The possible uses of the Chase—for utilitarian purposes or for pleasurable purposes—are put into stark contrast. The enjoyment derived from the woodland is, according to Trollope, dependent upon preserving the area as it is and, seemingly, has always been. "People . . . who come from afar to see the oaks" are latter-day Romantic travelers: the description explicitly links interests in the park and estate to a delight into pedestrianism and the pleasure of walking. In other words, Trollope is invoking a new discursive strategy to justify the preservation of the space, recreational tourism. Walking, in this context, takes on some of the pleasures that are elsewhere associated with hunting. In rambling through the forest, the pedestrian gains an intimate knowledge of the landscape. This point is extemporized from later, when, as Sowerby's debts grow and the loss of his property is imminent, he turns from property owner to tourist:

Of all the inanimate things of the world this wood of Chaldicotes was the dearest in the world. He was not a man to whom his companions gave much credit for feelings or thoughts akin to poetry, but here, out in the chase, his mind would be almost poetical. While wandering among the forest trees, he became susceptible of the tenderness of human nature: he would listen to the birds singing, and pick here and there a wild flower on his path. He would watch the decay of the old trees and the progress of the

young, and make pictures in his eyes of every turn into dell, and the, passing through a water-course, rose brown, rough irregular, and beautiful against the bank on the other side. (*FP* 440)

As with the previous description of the Chase, this is a rare moment of naturalist description in Trollope's writing. His description of space tends toward the cartographic, such as opened *Doctor Thorne*, rather than toward the topographical and visual. Yet both the cartographic and the topographic discourses are both invoked frequently in *Framley Parsonage*; as we recall, it is in this novel that his desire for a map of Barsetshire is stated. This topographical moment localizes a set of features and affects on a focused part of the comprehensive cartographic map. Topographic description represents the uniqueness of a specific part of the landscape. Each of Trollope's Barsetshire novels might be said to perform this topographical work; taken together, the group of related localities make up a region. Sowerby's description of his experience in the specific space of the Chase is redolent with Romantic possibilities: the walker's immersion in the walked landscape causes a momentary break from worldly knowledge and allows his own innate "human nature" to be freed from the social nature he performs in the rest of the world. As this argument would run, this topographical discourse allows Trollope to focus in on the ultimate use of the Chase, and we might say, the region: it allows the Rambler, or reader, unmediated access to a pure strain of being.

Not so fast, though. What is odd about moments of topographical description is not the uniqueness of the place, but its typicality. Like the Gresham family, the Chase is representative of an old Englishness threatened by the new: not a particularly startling thought. Yet the reason invoked for its continued existence is, as noted above, pleasure. Sowerby ponders his family in the woods, "how they had roamed there time out of mind

in those Chaldicotes woods, father and son and grandson in regular succession, each giving them over, without blemish or decrease, to his successor,” but he uses the woods for very different purposes. Primarily, he uses the Chase as a hunting ground. In *The Last Chronicle*, Sowerby’s work as a preserver of fox and gorse coverts is well established. As Archdeacon Grantly fondly recalls, “Mr. Sowerby of Chalidcotes . . . in his day was reckoned to be the best preserver of foxes in Barsetshire” (*LC* 329). Additionally, though, Sowerby has a very modern use for his land: business. It is here that Robarts is drawn into Sowerby’s financial web:

There was hunting again on that day; and as the hounds were to meet near Chaldicotes, and to draw some coverts lying on the verge of the chase, the ladies were to go in carriages through the drives of the forest, and Mr. Robarts was to escort them on horseback. Indeed it was one of those hunting-days got up rather for the ladies than for the sport. Great nuisances they are to steady, middle-aged hunting men; but the young fellows like them because they have thereby an opportunity of showing off their sporting finery, and of doing a little flirtation on horseback . . . Mr. Sowerby was one of those men who are known to be very poor—as poor as debt can make a man—but who, nevertheless, enjoy all the luxuries which money can give. It was believed that he could not live in England out of jail but for his protection as a member of Parliament; and yet it seemed that there was no end to his horses and carriages, his servants and retinue. He had been at this work for a great many years, and practice, they say, makes perfect. Such companions are very dangerous . . .

“Robarts, my dear fellow,” said Mr. Sowerby, when they were well under way down one of the glades of the forest,—for the place where the hounds met was some four or five miles from the house of Chaldicotes,—“ride on with me a moment. I want to speak to you; and if I stay behind we shall never get to the hounds.” So Mark, who had come expressly to escort the ladies, rode on alongside of Mr. Sowerby in his pink coat. (*FP* 69)

Trollope’s depiction of the sport in this moment reveals that the act of representing the relationship between hunters and landscape can be achieved in modes other than nostalgia or mythology. Illustrating a scene in which the fox hunt is performed for the

pleasure of female spectators and for the opportunities to discuss business between men, Trollope is describing the culture of mid-Victorian leisure. While the traditional sportsman would confine his conversation to the pedigree of hounds and the various coverts in the field, the mid-Victorian hunter often used the hunting ground to re-immense himself in the business of everyday life. The picturesque, sublime, and Romantic possibilities of hunting are raised in the novel only to be negated in this rare depiction (in the Barsetshire series, at least) of actual hunting. This is hunting as a spectator sport. As Mathew Kaiser documents, “middle-class Victorian, assisted by a burgeoning tourism industry and a newfound sense of leisure, proceeded to discover it growing in enviable, frightening, or amusing profusion” nearly everywhere (Kaiser 121). Here, fox-hunting is a staged performance of ritual.³⁰

Yet, as with Austen’s use of theatricality, Trollope’s strategy in *Framley Parsonage*’s hunting episodes has been to explore the dangers to the estate of undue metropolitan intervention in the workings of the local community. The danger of business into the symbolic space of the Chase contaminates multiple sanctified relationships in the region. First and foremost, it is a contamination of the clergyman’s role in his parish. As Raymond Carr notes, by the mid-Victorian era, the “ecclesiastical climate had turned against fox hunting. Ritualists might only object to hunting in Holy Week; Evangelicals thought it wicked whenever practiced and revived a long Protestant tradition that

³⁰ It should be noted that while Trollope’s depiction of hunting in this scene is somewhat mimetic, it is also another moment of gendering via landscaping. In the 1860s, new hunting garments and side-saddles enabled women to participate in fox-hunts in ever greater numbers. Trollope himself wrote “that I like to see three or four ladies out in a field, and I like it the better if I am happy enough to count one or more of them among my own acquaintances” (Anthony Trollope, *Hunting* 43). In the Barsetshire novels, however, women do not hunt; they watch.

disapproved, above all, of a hunting clergyman” (Carr, *English* 176). Trollope’s ambivalence toward “the hunting parson” is representative of widely-held social mores. “The world at large is very prone to condemn the hunting parson, regarding him as a man who is false to his profession” Trollope writes, “and, for myself, I am not prepared to say that the world is wrong,” he writes in his *Hunting Sketches* (Trollope, *Hunting* 83). Though “for the life of me I cannot see the reason against it, or tell any man why a clergyman should not ride the hounds,” Robarts’ downfall in *Framley Parsonage* exemplifies the moral threat posed by hunting society. Trollope situates the decline of Robarts’ middle-class virtue through the allure of hunting society and toward this end, the novel charts the way in which the desire for progress both expresses and aggravates the threat popular leisure poses to regional hegemony.

While Lady Lufton questions the conduct of her sporting clergyman, less noted is the degree to which his participation in hunting also further damns Sowerby’s professional and regional integrity. In trying to turn Chaldicotes into a businessplace, Sowerby attempts to replace a stable world of pure pleasure with a world of commercial activity. Sowerby draws Robarts “down one of the glades of the forest” to corrupt him, and this corruption is thus figured as a violation of the landscape. As we are repeatedly told, the government is threatening to cut down the old oaks and beeches in the Chase. Thus, Sowerby’s failure as a trustee of the Chase is met by an equally unfit governmental stewardship; use of the Chase for any purpose but for pleasure is denied in the novel. Sowerby, we are told, “attempted that plan of living as a tenant in his old house at Chaldicotes, and of making a living out of the land which he farmed; but he soon abandoned it. He had no aptitude for such industry, and could not endure his altered

position in the county” (*FP* 552). It would seem, though, that the land also could not stand to be used for utilitarian purposes. To return to our starting passage: a sense of alarm is raised by the government’s threatened deforestation of the Chase. Whatever the original purpose of the forest was, it’s modern purpose is to provide a space for escape, for both those from afar and those at home.

Accordingly, this is the crucial endorsement of playing grounds in the novel: Trollope isolates hunting for pleasure from hunting for business, and endorses the former. Other regional actors must be brought into save the space from both interfering outsider—the government—and the mismanaging insider—Sowerby. Sowerby’s ultimate rejection makes literal what has been metaphorically true throughout the Barsetshire novels; having continuously striven to associate his region with fox-hunting, Trollope endorses the inevitable when he finally endows the space with its true narrative meaning, entertainment. In expelling Sowerby, though, Trollope finally removes a historical and affective regional actor from the country: for the region to stay as it once was, the region is drained of one of its most representative regional characters. A shift has occurred, then, from *Doctor Thorne* to *Framley Parsonage*: in the former novel, Trollope sought to return the regional space to its proper owners; in the latter, the proper owners are proven to be the wrong stewards for the job. To preserve the local space, it must be rescued.

The local regional community, then, is reestablished not by becoming anti-urban, but by projecting the estate as a space of compensation for the discontent of modernization. Trollope’s slowly accumulating portrait of a peripheral region as a repository for natural Englishness rewrites the pastoral as a space that, though threatened by modernity, is seemingly resilient. The estate represents a relief from the excess of

modern aesthetic fantasy—Conway Dalrymple’s art—and the inefficient leadership of national institutions—Sir Raffle Baffle. Offering itself as a parallel model of social order and protection, the country houses organize the social as a protected aesthetic landscape. The *Barsetshire* novels, then, do not marginalize modern aspects of culture, but does root the possibilities for social cohesiveness within a discursive appreciation for the pleasure of rural life.

V. OUT OF THE BOOK, INTO THE WORLD

Reading Trollope’s regionalism through hunting offers a glimpse into the national reassessment of England’s internal spaces in the mid-Victorian era. After exploring Trollope’s complicated appreciation for regional communities, supported through the route of leisure, we can begin to see the performative function a visit to the estate, and the estate landscape, will increasingly become later in the century. Trollope’s estates are emblematic of national histories, but still play a particular role in the local community. Trollope’s *Barsetshire* novels draw attention to the common rituals through which the region is gestured to as the center of English life: the stately homes, visiting customs, commonplace families and leisure activities that preserve the integrity of the space and orient the landscape toward conservative politics. These estates are held by elites and upper-class families, but Trollope endorses their continued preservation through an activity that had become, by mid-century, a regular middle-class pastime. Trollope’s depiction of the regional community thus validates the idea of history represented by the country house, but also marks a shift from the upper-class country house visitor to the

middle-class leisured tourist. Trollope does not resolve the conflict between the image of hunting as a sport of gentlemen and as a sport open to all the people in the Barsetshire series. Instead, he links the mythology of hunting to the equally mythic pastoral region.

By preserving the West Country's regional identity through recreation, Trollope does more than pivot the Victorian regional novel away from contemporary political concerns; he also orients the genre toward a nostalgic fictional and regional topography. In the Barsetshire series, Trollope represents the West Country to a national audience through a familiar ritual of locality, but this is a vision of the countryside in which connections between the bourgeois and the agricultural workforce are elided and literal, not just metaphoric, portrayals of fox-hunting are missing. Trollope envisions an elite and increasingly hermetic hunting region when, in fact, he was himself an upper-middle-class, day-tripping hunter from London, hunting in regions around the country that had a thriving agricultural workforce in the 1850s and 1860s. Much of this changed in the 1870s, both within Trollope's writing and within England's agricultural counties. The landowning classes had traditionally defended their position as recipients of the estate system by spending some portion of their revenue on general agricultural and pastoral improvements—such as the kind Dorothea was engaged in on her uncle's estate (*Wilmot* 70). With the removal of international competitive barriers to trade in 1870 and the increasing dependence upon industry for national economic growth, however, this rationalization for the traditional estate system rapidly weakened. Adding to these factors was a series of rainy harvest seasons in the 1870s and 1880s (*Perren* 6–7). In short, the 1870s began a long period of agricultural economic depression in Britain. For fox-hunters this meant an increasingly strained relationship with the local communities through

whose fields they trampled: the mythology of the egalitarian hunting pack's place in the traditional rural community was no longer sustainable.¹³ Fox-hunters, in progressively larger numbers, wanted to hunt over land cultivated by farmers who sought to raise ever more difficult yields from it (Itzkowitz 152). It is in Trollope's 1870s Palliser novels that he portrays the blood, dirt, and snobbery of Victorian fox-hunting society. He materially embodied the sport in his later fiction, which was written at a time when the sport's systemic connection to English country life was becoming increasingly fractured; Yet, when representing actual hunting, Trollope presents—and continues to embrace—the practice without addressing the problems that undermined its role in the region. He creates a narrative map for regional novels, but it is a map that orients the genre into the past.

CHAPTER FOUR

WESSEX RELICS:

THOMAS HARDY AND THE NATIONAL PRESERVATION MOVEMENT

In a brochure available for purchase at Max Gate in Dorchester, England, images of Thomas Hardy's home dominate a small six-page souvenir pamphlet, which is one of several for sale to the numerous tourists visiting the property each year. The photographs show a typical suburban middle-class Victorian villa made of red and brown brick, with a driveway running along the front of the house and several functional chimney pipes poking out from the slate roof. Pictures of Thomas Hardy accompany the images of his home: Hardy in his study; Hardy and his second wife, Florence, playing with their dog in the garden. The home seems to exemplify bland Victorian middle-class domestic architecture; situated in the suburbs of Dorchester and, now, just off a highway, Max Gate's distinctive features—such as moveable bookcases and a sundial on the side of the house—are few; the house is a typical and not particularly noteworthy urban Victorian home. According to the booklet, "Hardy designed this home to show that he was part of the wealthy middle classes of Dorchester," but the original structure before it was expanded had only two bedrooms and two reception rooms, with a kitchen and service rooms in the back and servant quarters in the attic ("Hardy Country"). Typical as it is, however, Max Gate, where Hardy wrote *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, is the site at which Hardy reached not only the culmination of his novelistic career, but

his architectural career as well. Hardy had trained as an architect before abandoning the profession to write, and designing Max Gate allowed Hardy to return to his enduring interest in the minutia of architecture and building methods. His exacting supervision of every detail of the home's building led to frequent quarrels with his brother and father, whom he had hired to construct the structure, over issues such as the merits of polished wood floors and the placement of drainage pipes for the home's modern flush toilet (Pite 267, 450). Despite all the energy Hardy put into designing the home, it is, as Claire Tomalin writes, "uninspired but comfortable . . . [f]ew have admired it, and no one could call it beautiful" (Tomalin 204). Indeed, the most interesting parts of the house are buried beneath the property, rather than on top of it. In 1884, while workers were digging the foundations and well for Max Gate, Hardy found the remains of several urns, filled the skeletons and objects, which appeared to be from the Roman period. This was a discovery that delighted him because, he wrote in his autobiography (written in his second wife Emily Florence's voice) "the only drawback to the site [had] seemed to him to be its newness" (E. Hardy 163).¹

The souvenir pamphlet allocates only one page to information about Max Gate, and leaves out details about the architectural and archeological features of the home entirely. Instead, it is filled with descriptions of "the natural and cultural heritage" in the surrounding area ("Hardy Country"). The booklet directs visitors to the properties in and around England's southwest Dorset county owned by the National Trust for Places of

¹ Keen to share these findings, in 1884 Hardy presented a paper to the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club on "Some Romano-British Relics found at Max Gate." Hardy presented his paper in 1884, but it was not published in the society's proceedings until 1890.

Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, including not only Max Gate but also Hardy's Birthplace, a cottage in the village of Higher Brockhampton, Stinsford Church, where Hardy's heart is buried, and Cloud's Hill, the home of Hardy's close friend, T. E. Lawrence. Visiting information is collected under the booklet's "Hardy's Country" banner, with details about the places that "lovers of literature and the countryside" can visit. They can travel to "the fairytale cottage he grew up in, take a walk through the woods he explored as a child, and discover the room in which *Far From the Madding Crowd* was written." The booklet urges visitors to "bring to life the story of one of our literary geniuses and create stronger links between properties, the landscape and the local community" by taking part in the "exciting plans for Hardy Country." With its introduction by way of Max Gate and the physical remains of Hardy's life, the booklet endorses what has become a truism about southwest England, as well as an essential part of the tourist industry in modern England: knowing the region requires knowing Thomas Hardy's novels and the topography of his "semi-fictional Wessex," and vice versa.

The National Trust, in putting Victorian regional spaces to cultural and recreational use, blurs the boundary between Wessex's historic and present identity by preserving the material presence of the region's past, allowing that past to remain unchanged and to construct the region's identity in the present. A visit to Max Gate is an opportunity to encounter both the Wessex novels and Hardy himself. By taking a real journey into an imaginative region, modern critics and readers reveal a devotion to the search for authenticity that also preoccupied much of Hardy's Victorian audience. Along with the flourishing Hardy tourist industry is a similarly fertile field of work bridging the critical/touristic divide, devoted to "decoding" Wessex for readers by precisely

identifying the localities of Dorset within Hardy's fictional landscapes.² Twenty-first century readers and conservationists seem eager for Hardy's novels to remain urtexts for Wessex's historic identity. Wessex is, to borrow Raphael Samuel's term, a "theatre of memory" even in its absence, a "partly real, partly dream world," which readers in both the nineteenth century and today might attempt to validate by way of a few hours train ride from London to Dorset (Samuel; Hardy, "Preface" 5). As readers make their way through Hardy's novels and visit National Trust properties, they can imagine themselves as part of a regional community at once imaginary and real, knowable and alien.

This chapter, by exploring Hardy's conflicted place in the Victorian preservation movement, argues that the establishment of the conservation industry effectively institutionalized the late-Victorian attitude toward regional English spaces. Unlike Trollope, who embraced recreation as a means of preserving the West Country's identity and traditional spaces, Hardy's literature and his conservation work present a more conflicted portrait. Paradoxically, despite Hardy's active role in reviving and popularizing southwest England as a region beloved by literary tourists, he was also keenly aware of the disturbing consequences that the work of cultural conservation could have in shaping Dorset's landscape and identity. Entering into Dorset via Hardy's

² I take the term "decoding" from Desmond Hawkins, who argues that the "decoding of Hardy's place names has become a scholarly pursuit in its own right" (Hawkins 13). In addition to a thriving online community of contemporary "searchers for scenery," scholarly books such as those by Hawkins, Ralph Pite (*Hardy's Geography: Wessex and the Regional Novel*), Michael Irwin (*Reading Hardy's Landscapes*), Denys Kay-Robinson (*Hardy's Wessex Reappraised*), and Scott Rode (*Reading and Mapping Hardy's Roads*) intertwine critical readings of the novels with a focus on the "real" Dorset landscapes that form their setting. There are also countless works intended to provide guides for readers and tourists through the region, including Rodney Legg's *Literary Dorset*, Hugh Brasnett's *Thomas Hardy: A Pictorial Guide*, and the series by M.R. Skilling published by the Thomas Hardy Society, which includes *A Walk Around Weymouth (Budmouth) With Thomas Hardy* and *A Walk Around Dorchester (Casterbridge) with Thomas Hardy*.

construction of Max Gate, rather than into Wessex through the “fairytale cottage” of Hardy’s Birthplace, can help us see Hardy’s investment in shaping not only Dorset’s past, but also its nineteenth-century professional middle-class present (“Hardy Country”). At Max Gate, Hardy chose to build his home anew, alongside but apart from the remains of the region’s history. Hardy, as an author and as an architect, is notoriously obsessed with detailing Dorset but also, I contend, with warning middle-class regional communities about the dangers of aligning their identity with historical remains. Despite, and partly because of, Hardy’s Wessex fiction, Hardy plays a key but seldom noted role in late Victorian societies’ mounting concern for their regional and national heritage.

This chapter begins with a discussion of Hardy’s 1881 novel, *A Laodicean: A Story of To-Day*, written just as Hardy was planning and moving into Max Gate. I focus specifically on Hardy’s examination, in the novel, of the problems involved in the maintenance and repair of ancient buildings and his annexing of these concerns from contemporary upper and middle-class Wessex identity. Next, I sketch out Hardy’s continuing architectural and budding conservationist work for the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). I argue that the late nineteenth century successor to SPAB, England’s National Trust for Historic Interest, positioned preservation as a middle- and upper-class conservative political act and consciously used English regional architecture as historical evidence for a nationalist vision of English life and social order. Finally, I place Hardy’s architectural and novelistic work within the context of Hardy’s revision of his Wessex novels in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In these revisions, Hardy encouraged readers to see his imaginative Wessex as an identifiable, mappable region. The purpose of this chapter is to show how

Hardy's Wessex fiction and the work of the preservation societies tell two divergent stories that can help us think about regionalism's role in one of the Victorian period's most remarkable phenomena—namely the broad-based effort to preserve England's regions for recreation.

By putting Hardy's Wessex novels, and the explicitly spatialized form of history that they demonstrate, in conversation with literary tourism and the late Victorian heritage industry that in part rose in response to his texts, we can see how Hardy dismantled as much as constructed a mnemonics of Wessex's regionalism. Hardy's work has a particularly vexed relationship to a discussion of landscape and memory, given that his work is often understood as an effort to evade the encroachment of modernity against a rural backdrop that is neither romantic nor idealized. This is, often, how critics from the late nineteenth century to our contemporary moment, including John Barrell, Michael Millgate, and Raymond Williams, have interpreted his novels: in their reading of Wessex, they see Hardy's attempt to capture the vanishing world of Dorset for his readers and view that attempt as deeply nostalgic. His project, they concur, is motivated by the urgency of the region's steady absorption into "England." This body of work, by Barrell, Millgate, Williams, and others writing in this vein, is central to Hardy's critical tradition, but a more skeptical reading of Hardy's project allows other possible interpretations, and motivations, to emerge. I want to suggest that attending to Hardy's spatial practice—his literary landscapes, his work as an architect, and his role as a preservationist—opens up contradictions and inconsistencies between fiction and reality that trouble his almost clichéd association with regional fiction.

I. A *LAODICEAN* AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF HISTORY

In April 1879, flush with the success from the recent publication of *The Return of the Native* (1878), Hardy agreed to write a new novel, *A Laodicean; or, the Castle of the De Stancy, A Story of To-day*, for the European edition of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. In the novel, Hardy leaves the pastoral and historic world of Wessex society behind in favor of a portrait of Wessex "To-day." Such a temporal change might at first seem odd: Hardy's most successful novels up to that point—*Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876) and *The Return of the Native* (1879)—had been set in the seemingly unchanging world of Wessex agrarian society. Reviewers celebrated Hardy for his "powerful scenic and dramatic effects," the "intensely realistic delineations of picturesque aspects of common life among the agricultural laborers and peasantry of England," and the "vivid descriptions of heath and fen and moorland scenery"—none of which were to be found in *A Laodicean* ("Editor's" 474-5). The *Saturday Review* lamented that "unlike anything Hardy has done, *A Laodicean* has little rusticity; it may be a new departure for Hardy in the wrong direction" (qtd. in Gerber and David I:35).³ The

³ Modern critics have been equally dismissive. Since the novel has been regarded as "dull," "poor stuff," Hardy's "worst" and "weakest" and a "fairly disastrous failure," recent critical reception to the novel has not exactly stimulated enthusiasm about reading it, though Norman Page has generously called it "an interesting . . . and a highly individual, failure" (Page 107). More recent critics, however, have turned to Hardy's minor novels, which represent a significant percentage of his literary oeuvre, to supplement and enlarge our understanding of Hardy's works. Peter Widdowson, for example, in his *Hardy in History* (1989), finds the critical denigration of the minor novels to be part of a conspiracy of the institutions of "criticism, education, publishing, the media and the film industry [in England]" to use Hardy to "endorse the ideological reading of 'reality' which constitutes realism" (Widdowson i). Reintroducing the minor novels into Hardy's canon, in this view, has the salutary effect of disrupting a naturalization and celebration of realism that serves the ideological interests of the bourgeoisie. The critical concern with representations of women and gender that has distinguished Hardy criticism of the last several decades also motivates a reappraisal of Hardy's early fiction. Jane Thomas, in *Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent:*

reception to the novel, however, was not entirely negative. The bourgeois and aristocratic press embraced the novel enthusiastically. The *Morning Post* welcomed this “entirely new direction” in Hardy’s work, which proved he could deal with characters “from the higher walks of life” and not simply with “rustic subjects.” The *Court Circular* thought it ranked “with the best works of English fiction.” Whatever the reception of this “new direction” in Hardy’s work, reviewers struggled to define what genre the text belonged to. While Arthur Barker suggested that the story “seems to be a conventional love-tale,” the reviewer from the *London World* saw it as a gab-bag, a “curious . . . mixture of sensationalism, philosophy, religion, spiritual affection, and carnal suggestiveness” (Gerber and David 2:33).

All of these reviews, oddly, gloss over the central theme of the novel: architecture. The novel’s main interest is in the restoration of a decaying Norman Castle in Wessex, Stancy Castle—how it should be restored, if it should be restored, and who should restore it. As contemporary reviewers do note, the novel is not concerned with the working class, but rather with the romance of two upper and middle-class characters, George Somerset and Paula Powers. Paula has inherited Stancy Castle from her father, a railway magnate, and commissions first Mr. Havill, a local builder, and then George Somerset, a young architect from London, to modernize the ancient castle. Paula is drawn to the progressive architect, but also to the old-fashioned Captain De Stancy, the eldest son of the family who once owned the castle and who now lives in the “mushroom

Reassessing the Minor Novels, offers her readings as “a supplement to existing feminist readings of his prose work which focus, most exclusively, on the canonical texts” (Thomas 4).

modernism” of a suburban home outside Markton. After much indecision, Paula marries George, and the castle, having mysteriously burned to the ground, is annexed “as a curiosity” next to a home George builds by their side, “a new house [to] show the modern spirit for evermore!” (*A Laodicean* 379). If a conventional happy ending would have used a marriage to ally the new industrial wealth with the old landed aristocracy, Paula’s interest in an architect who is neither her social nor her financial equal turns the novel away from convention and toward modernity, as Dorothea Brooke’s marriage to Will Ladislaw does in Eliot’s *Middlemarch*.

Why does Hardy’s portrait of contemporary Victorian Wessex bring the issue of architectural restoration to the forefront? And, more to the point, why should restoration matter in a Wessex novel? *A Laodicean* is, in many ways, a prolonged account of mid-Victorian architectural debates and their effect on regional landscapes. While it is perhaps unsurprising that the romance plot should, like the architectural plot, represent a choice among attitudes to community and tradition, what interests me is how these intertwined issues are enhanced by debates both intrinsic and extrinsic to the novel. Claudius Beatty argues that the novel “should be compulsory reading for anybody interested in the complex and ever-expanding world of Victorian engineering and architecture” (Beatty 5). Following Beatty’s lead, I focus here on interrelated aspects of the novel’s spatial imaginary: first, the novel’s portrayal of local landowners’ conflicted attitude toward Wessex’s historic landscape and, consequently, the way that the relationship between space, class, and history is worked out in the text’s interwoven professionalization and romance plots.

Before turning to the novel's interior, though, it might be helpful to determine if *A Laodicean* even is a regional, Wessex novel, since the plot and interests of the novel, as Hardy's reviewers noted, would suggest otherwise. *A Laodicean* was originally published in 1881, and then twice again during Hardy's lifetime: in 1895, when the novel was part of the Wessex Novels editions by Osgood, McIlvaine, and again in 1912, as part of Macmillan's Wessex Edition series. When the novel was republished in 1912, Hardy grouped it together with *Desperate Remedies* (1871) and *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876) as "Novels of Ingenuity." Apart from seemingly coincidental connections among the novels, such as a castle or country house as the setting for each or the fact that they were all written in the first decade of Hardy's career as a novelist, they have little in common.⁴ Hardy characterized them as "Experiments . . . written for the nonce simply" (Hardy, *Thomas Hardy's Personal* 45-6). Originally, *A Laodicean* lacked even the shared geographical setting of the other novels in the category, and indeed all of Hardy's other novels. In order to bring the novel in to the Wessex fold Hardy had to make a series of topographical revisions in 1895/1896 and again in 1912.

The novel was originally set in a vague locale and identifiable as part of the Wessex landscape mainly because of Hardy's description of Stancy Castle, which he based on an eleventh-century fortified castle in Somerset, Dunster Castle. For the Wessex edition of the 1890s, Hardy heightened, in description connections between Stancy Castle and Dunster Castle and placed Stancy Castle in "Outer Wessex" on the map of Wessex published with the novels. Upon his return to the text in 1912 he included a series of

⁴ See Rimmer for a discussion of Hardy's "Novels of Ingenuity."

meticulous topographical changes that solidified the novel's geographic specificity. Hardy attempted to appease the "investigating topographer" in part by scattering more Wessex place names throughout the text (*Laodicean* 380). In order to emphasize the fictional castle's relationship to its Dorset original, for example, Hardy mentions the former's proximity to the town of Markton—a town quite close to the actual Dunster village in Somerset (Schad 387). In an 1895 letter to the writer and regional historian George Douglas, Hardy complains that his revisions were a "sort of drudgery," but they also seemed, to him, essential to make his novels responsible to real spaces (Hardy, *Collected Letters* 2:70). What had once been the vague horizons of a fictional topography was now subject to the exacting standards of an audience whose members would hold Hardy accountable for every landmark, street name and mile within his novelistic landscape.⁵

Hardy's work to place *A Laodicean* firmly in the Wessex landscape, paradoxically, panders to the very sort of nostalgic middle-class regionalism he rejects in the novel. Hardy's protagonist, Somerset, is a reflection of himself before Hardy became a professional writer: drawn to poetry but unable to live off his literary work, Somerset/Hardy turns to architecture and specializes in Gothic Revival architecture. Like Hardy, Somerset easily travels between London, Wessex, and Europe; both have the means and knowledge to shape Wessex's architecture in accordance with contemporary styles; and both celebrate entrepreneurship as a means of social advancement. Moreover,

⁵ As Patricia Ingham notes, the Wessex of Hardy's novels progressively witness, stress, and "strengthen the Wessex element so as to suggest that this half-real half-imagined location had been coherently conceived from the beginning, though of course he knew this was not so" (Ingham viii).

both author and character are concerned about the newfound authority of the middle class to renovate the nation's architectural heritage in their own image. Not much constrained by taste, middle-class architects blithely mixed Gothic and Greek, Moorish and Byzantine, with old and new vernacular styles. Writing *A Laodicean* in the early 1880s and revising the novel multiple times in the next decades forced Hardy to translate his general concern with architectural "restoration" to the specific instance of Wessex's regional heritage. Additionally, it compelled Hardy to define his relationship to the historically dense landscape he returns to and builds Max Gate in, also in the early 1880s.

Hardy's preoccupation with "restoring" *A Laodicean* to the Wessex landscape is perhaps ironic, given that he and his novels often articulate the dangers of returning to home and a former state: from Clym Yeobright to Grace Melbury to Tess Durbeyfield, the Wessex novels are littered with characters whose search for places lost to history or change are variously troubled, thwarted, or tragic.⁶ Indeed, Hardy's warnings of the dangers involved in returning to a previous state in a changing environment are in keeping with his protestation against architectural restoration within *A Laodicean*, if not in keeping with his work after the text was, ostensibly, finished in 1881. To modern readers the term "restoration" might bring to mind earnest attempts at historical preservation, but in the second half of the nineteenth century the word, as the debate between Somerset and Havill in the novel bears out, usually meant just the opposite. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) endorsed a form of repair and rebuilding of

⁶ "Hardy's profound ambivalence about returning," Joyce writes, "about the need for a reconnection and inherent problems in this attempt, the desire for an immediacy of belonging that had first to be intellectualized from a distance—is expressed in the maps that accompany his text" (Joyce 148).

ancient buildings, and in particular, churches, that often included destroying parts of a building—or even the whole building—to reconstruct it in an architectural style that was either anachronistic or barely suggestive of the building’s original style, such as making a medieval building masquerade in the high gothic style of the nineteenth century, for example (Donavan 2). Restoration involved making a building uniform by smoothing over irregularity and, in so doing, unsettling the history that Hardy, along with John Ruskin and William Morris, thought inhered in the cracks, crude angles, and rough edges of a building’s original form. Indeed, restorers made little attempt to maintain the building’s original form or historical integrity. Church restoration of this type reached its height after the 1850s, when officials from the Anglican Church looked to expand both their congregations and their influence through the physical expansion of their churches (Miele, “‘Their interest and habit’” 151-73).

A Laodicean mocks the idea of “restoring” an imagined topography and architectural style by casting Paula’s choices as not only one between suitors, but also one between history and progress. In a novel that features an architect and a railway magnate’s daughter as its protagonists, then, we should not be surprised to find that history resides in forms, in particular in Stancy castle, while modernity resides in technology. The novel insistently asks how one should be modern in a historical landscape. When the novel opens, we find Somerset, “a summer traveler from London sketching mediaeval details” of English Gothic architecture in the West Country (*Laodicean* 5). The description of Somerset’s “circuit” orients the reader first by referring to London, Somerset’s home, and then skims past Sleeping-Green, a small village Somerset is staying at, in order to focus on the castle, which Somerset discovers by

following a telegraph wire: “Somerset decided to follow the lead of the wire . . . then there appeared against the sky the walls and towers of a castle, half ruin, half residence, standing on an eminence hard by” (*Laodicean* 16-17). Ironically, it is a symbol of modernity—the telegraph wire—that leads the novel into the historic landscape. The opening chapters invite readers to follow Somerset on his journey into the castle and, in doing so, they introduce the reader to topography that forms the essential concern of the novel. Meaning is thus rendered relationally as readers are asked to place Somerset, the professional middle-class architect, within a cross-section of Wessex’s topographical connections: city, village, and, finally, local architecture. History and technology both inhabit the same temporal and narrative space, and yet neither the ancient nor the modern has precedence.

In this juxtaposition of temporalities, Hardy presents Stancy Castle through Somerset’s eyes as a Gothic cliché:

The castle was not exceptionally large, but it had all the characteristics of its most important fellows. Irregular, dilapidated, and muffled in creepers as a great portion of it was, some part—a comparatively modern wing—was inhabited . . . Over all rose the keep, a square solid tower apparently not much injured by wars or weather, and darkened with ivy on one side . . . In spite of the habitable and more modern wing, neglect and decay had set their mark upon the outworks of the pile, unfitting them for a more positive light than that of the present hour.
(*Laodicean* 17)

Complete with parapets, a drawbridge, a crypt and a moat, the castle seems to have been drawn straight out of a Radcliffe novel. Yet the narrator’s tone is matter-of-fact as he chronicles the architectural aspects of the castle, the history that remains very much solidly in the present. This is a present that links the castle’s irregular features to the structure’s place in local and national historical narratives, from the “mediaeval

fortress's" "thicker walls of Norman date" to the "old keys [which] were never given up" even though "the principal entrance-doors . . . were knocked to pieces in the civil wars" (*Laodicean* 91, 379, 38). These, the narrator suggests, are the material remains whose importance are lost to the present, to Paula, to Mr. Havill, the architect she originally hires to work on the castle (who has not been professionally trained, as Somerset has), and to the RIBA, who remain silent on the way to treat such places.

One way to read Hardy's description of the castle, and to understand Hardy's larger project, is to see his work as a novelist (as Millgate, Barrel and Gatrell do) as casting himself of the guardian of these forgotten details and remains, and the castle as performing the memory-work for local history that national history overlooks.⁷ Steeped in gothic fictions and architectural history, Stancy Castle is a reminder of past lives and past stories. In *A Laodicean*, however, Hardy seems to be more interested in rejecting the past's control over the present than in rescuing the remains of the past through narrative. Hardy does show how Stancy Castle stands as a constant witness to the history of aristocratic and feudal power: in addition to being involved in the English Civil War, its crypts contain reminders of both the War of the Roses and the Crusades. Moreover, since it was built by the Normans, the castle owes its very existence to the violent enforcement of conquest, a witness "to some of the ghastliest atrocities . . . that the civilized world has

⁷ Michael Valdez Moses also explores the ways that Hardy's regionalism is most felt in temporal terms; his fiction, Moses argues, traverses a dense historical landscape and eulogizes the ways in which the past is increasingly out of reach. Moses comments specifically on the *Mayor of Casterbridge*: "Like Casterbridge itself, Hardy's novel is a kind of heavily stratified archaeological dig or historical palimpsest, in which various and distinct forms of premodern life are superimposed one on top of another, as if the 'posthistorical' or modern perspective Hardy occupies is at such a great remove from all earlier forms of premodern existence that they appear as equally and uniformly archaic—and therefore tinged with the threat of violence and tragedy" (Moses 31).

beheld” (*Laodicean* 246). Yet this chronicle records historical violence, not the violence of history repeating itself in the present; Paula Powers is no Tess Durbeyfield. The castle marks a place where meaning once was, not in an effort to restore this meaning, but rather to show what has been gained through modernity; cloaking modernity in the ephemera of history, Hardy suggests, overlooks the depth of violence and historical meaning the Castle contains and stunts progress into the future.

Hardy’s opposition to adapting history to the “the wants of the new civilization” are registered, then, through the depiction of novel’s debates over the architectural restoration of the Castle (*Laodicean* 156). The debate is staged on two levels: the first through Paula’s indecision about how—or if—she should restore the Castle, and the second as a competition between Somerset and Havill. Paula fills the ancient castle with the artifacts of modernity—popular periodicals, circulating library books, gymnastic equipment and parasols—artifacts which represent her allegiance, more than to anything else, to the pastiche of modern culture.⁸ She vacillate over whether or not to build a faux-Greek temple in the Norman Castle’s main courtyard, smoothing over signs of decay through patchwork, or retaining and enhancing the Castle’s “eclecticism” (120).⁹ In waffling back and forth, Paula is the ultimate modern—or, as Julian Wolfreyss notes, the ultimate Laodicean, “one who is lukewarm or indifferent in religion, politics” (“laodicean”). Wolfreys suggests that in the novel, “being or belonging to the modern is

⁸ For more on Paula and the “problematic terrain of the transition from old to new in mid-Victorian culture and society” see Donguk Kim.

⁹ For a further discussion of the novel’s eclecticism, see Christine Bolus-Reichert, “Walter Pater and Thomas Hardy: ‘Triumph in Mutability’” and Andrew Ranford, “The Marriage of the Ancient and Modern in *A Laodicean*.”

to be nothing other than indecisively enfolded in heterogeneous temporal and historical, and therefore, cultural flows (Wolfreyss 150). Paula is a mirage or perhaps more accurately, a bellwether, of the “modern malady” that George too “had suffered”: unable to decide “which of the many fashions of art that were coming and going in kaleidoscopic change was the true point of departure,” Paula and George are manifestations of modernity haunted by the traces of the past and unable to cure their conditions (*Laodicean* 7).

The signs of the novel’s temporal and representational battles manifest themselves most clearly in the architectural debates between Havill and Somerset. The first glimpse of how modern architectural restoration will be treated in the book comes by way of the newly built village church, a “chapel of red brick, with pseudo-classical ornamentation,” which has been designed by Havill (*Laodicean* 8). This architectural “monstrosity” is a marker of Havill’s, and the Victorian restoration architect’s, indifference to history and delight in the “geometrical oppressiveness” of smooth, modern architecture (*Laodicean* 8). The stage is set between Havill and Somerset, who “took greater pleasure in floating in lonely currents of thought than with the general tide of opinion” (*Laodicean* 5). To decide between their visions for her Castle, Paula decides to have their competing plans for the restoration of Stancy Catle publicly judged by the RIBA (*Laodicean* 5). As Claudius Beatty notes, “The competition was . . . an indirect criticism of the confusion in the architectural profession in the mid-Victorian period” (Beatty 6). Havill, who had worked as a landscape gardener, a builder, and a road contractor, represents, to Hardy, a typical Victorian semi-professional architect indifferent to and ignorant of the destruction of architectural restoration. Beatty goes on to note that in staging a competition between

Havill and Somerset before the RIBA, “Hardy would seem, therefore, much in advance of his time with regard to this question of professional standards The only way to deal with incompetent architects . . . was to introduce the practice of submitting all plans to the arbitration of a properly constituted body, the RIBA (Beatty 6).

Perhaps even more presciently, though, Hardy makes the issue of Stancy Castle’s restoration—which is, after all, privately owned—a matter of public concern, a way for the community at large to examine the problems involved in the maintenance and repair of such ancient buildings. In an editorial printed in a local newspaper and transcribed in the novel, a local architect calls the community to arms over Paula’s restoration plans:

The letter was professedly written by a dispassionate person solely in the interests of art. It drew attention to the circumstance that the ancient and interesting castle of the De Stancys had unhappily passed into the hands of an iconoclast by blood, who, without respect for the tradition of the county, or any feeling whatever for history in stone, was about to demolish much, if not all, that was interesting in that ancient pile, and insert in its midst a monstrous travesty of some Greek temple. In the name of all lovers of mediaeval art, conjured the simple-minded writer, let something be done to save a building which, injured and battered in the Civil Wars, was now to be made a complete ruin by the freaks of an irresponsible owner. (*Laodicean* 120)

Here Hardy describes architectural restoration as a “monstrous” process of demolition. In Hardy’s account, restoration is violence—a destructive, anachronistic violence done by modern iconoclasts against the artifacts of history. Restoration pays no regard to the layers of history accumulated in the Castle’s structure; Hardy describes a process of dismemberment and wanton disregard for tradition, with Greek temples being inserted into mediaeval courts. This contemplated disregard of the origin of the Castle’s structure extends to the material remains of the building itself. Havill advises, in order to repair “that fine Saxon vaulting,” to take “out some of the old stones and reinstanc[e] new ones

exactly like them” (*Laodicean* 60). Echoing Somerset and Hardy, Paula protests that “the new ones won’t be Saxon . . . And then in time to come, when I have passed away, and those stones have become stained like the rest, people will be deceived. I should prefer an honest patch to any such make-believe of Saxon relics” (*Laodicean* 60). Here restoration is once more an apt analogy for the destruction of the past—not just the architectural past, but personal histories as well. Somerset, and, eventually, Paula, is drawn to the “irregular” fabric of the past, with which he feels a responsibility; the past remains in discrete sections of the castle, as wrecked and crumbling bits that the advance of restoration threatens to erase.

In other Wessex novels (most prominently in *Jude the Obscure*¹⁰), Hardy tackles the issue of church restoration, but in *A Laodicean*, he is more interested in the impact the architectural restoration movement is having on privately held, yet publicly significant structures. Descriptions of Stancy Castle and the landscape scattered throughout the novel make frequent mention of the Castle’s part in a violent national heritage, of the past being forgotten, and of the present overwriting, quite literally, the region’s deep English roots in the pastiche of modernity. Charlotte De Stancy, Paula’s companion, describes to Somerset a sign of Paula’s romantic love of the past. Paula has designed a “General Plan of a Town,” which she hopes to build (à la Dorothea Brooke) near to the village railway:

¹⁰ In *Jude*, the restored village church stands as a symbol of the obliteration of the past: “Above all, the original church, hump-backed, wood-turreted, and quaintly hipped, had been taken down, and either cracked up into heaps of road-metal in the lane, or utilized as pig-sty walls, garden seats, guard-stones to fences, and rockeries in the flower-beds of the neighborhood. In place of it a tall new building of modern Gothic design, unfamiliar to English eyes, had been erected on a new piece of ground by a certain obliterator of historic records who had run down from London and back in a day. The site whereon so long had stood the ancient temple to the Christian divinities was not even recorded on the green and level grass-plot that had immemorially been the churchyard, the obliterated graves being commemorated by eighteenpenny cast-iron crosses warranted to last five years” (Hardy *Jude* 50).

“She is going to grant cheap building leases, and develop the manufacture of pottery.”

“Pottery—how very practical she must be!” “O no! no!” replied Miss De Stancy, in tones showing how supremely ignorant he must be of Miss Power’s nature if he characterized her in those terms. “It is GREEK pottery she means—Hellenic pottery she tells me to call it, only I forget. There is beautiful clay at the place, her father told her: he found it in making the railway tunnel. She has visited the British Museum, continental museums, and Greece, and Spain: and hopes to imitate the old fictile work in time [.]” (*Laodicean* 30)

The phrase “imitate the old” crystallizes Paula’s fascination with past forms foreign to her local landscape; her vision for the future of Wessex is to build around a copy of other styles and other countries. Paula’s estrangement from her surroundings is epitomized in her obsession with Greek pottery and Greek architecture: Hardy mocks the middle-class obsession with the materialistic remains of alienated history as a sign as much of their proximity to the past as of their ignorance of their own English history, high and low. Rather than being practical, by building and expanding her father’s manufacturing work in the region, Paula’s work—the work of Wessex “to-day”—is romantic, anachronistic, and imitative. Indeed, the novel is overflowing with copies, from the sketches that Somerset draws in the novel’s opening to the photographs that William Dare, Captain De Stancy’s son, is constantly taking of the Castle.¹¹

Descriptions of the Castle, then, become significant as much for the narrator’s litany of what could be lost through restoration as for efforts to exhume what the remains of the Castle’s violent history. The Castle’s architecture and material relics reveal an entire history about ways of living in history. The castle’s dungeon, for example, contains

¹¹ William Dare is the illegitimate son of Captain de Stancy and is, according to George Wing, a “symptom and portent of modern sickness” in the novel (Wing 229).

a “dry bone” that made Somerset imagine is the remains of the “cribbed and confined wretches” who had been confined (*Laodicean* 64). The Castle, a “fossil of feudalism,” has more than one skeleton in its closet.¹² The novel makes this point as a joke, when Somerset falls into a tower, at the bottom of which are the remains of the dungeon and the bone, with its unreadable origin: “whether it was human, or had come from the castle larder in bygone times, he could not tell” (*Laodicean* 65). Stancy Castle, owing its existence to the “violent enforcement of conquest,” is continuing to take its prisoners (*Laodicean* Schad xxviii).

Stancy Castle looms formidable and ever-present throughout the novel, then, because it provides the principal force behind Hardy’s argument, extended throughout the whole of the novel, that the problems involved in managing the remains of the nation’s heritage are too great for one family to deal with: “People hold these places in trust for the nation,” as Paula says in anticipation of the rhetoric of the National Trust (*Laodicean* 61). The novel argues that restoration, and building identity on restoration or fictions of the past, are lies modernity tells itself to gain a stable referent. Yet, if restoration is destruction, what should be done with these places? Stancy castle burns to the ground at the end of the novel, leaving Somerset and Paula to decide “what course would be best to pursue in the circumstances, [and] gradually deciding not to attempt rebuilding the castle . . . there was a feeling common to both of them that it would be well to make an opportunity of a misfortune, and leave the edifice in ruins [and] start their married life in

¹² The skeleton is a sign that, as Walter Benjamin argues, “there is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism” (qtd. in Schad xxviii).

a mansion of independent construction hard by the old one” (*Laodicean* 379). Paula and Somerset care for the ruins of the past, but do not allow those ruins to determine their present. The modern couple builds their new life, literally, next door to the castle.

Ruined doubly, Stancy Castle represents a chapter in the violent history embedded in Wessex’s landscape, as well as the potential hold history can continue to exert over the construction of the present. In this twice ruined state, the castle becomes a relic, an ideological trace in the landscape. Somerset’s reaction to the fire is to “remove the ashes, charred wood, and so on from the ruin, and plant more ivy. The winter rains will soon wash the unsightly smoke from the walls, and Stancy Castle will be beautiful in its decay” (*Laodicean* 379). Accordingly, Somerset’s plan for his and Paula’s new home is, we can imagine, akin to Hardy’s vision for Max Gate: he “had not attempted to adapt an old building to the wants of the new civilization. He had placed his new erection bedside it . . . His work formed a palace, with a ruinous castle annexed as a curiosity” (*Laodicean* 156-7). Architecture is as much a reminder of history as of social change. The new home will reveal as much about the ways of living as the castle, with its towers and dungeons, had about England’s historical identities. The novel, and Hardy’s own work at Max Gate, gestures toward an emphasis on the importance of the ordinary in regional life as a way of re-contextualizing the great and monumental in the past, and concentrating on the architect’s public role. By the novel’s end, history is annexed and Wessex’s modernity is built on originality, not imitation.

Hardy’s rejection of restoration in the novel is also, then, a lesson to upper and middle-class regional landowners, who can choose to gloss over the violence of the past, or acknowledge its presence and annex it alongside the new structures that represent

modern Wessex. In 1896, when he revised *A Laodicean* and strengthened its topographical links to Wessex, Hardy noted:

The changing of the old order in country manors and mansions may be slow or sudden, may have many issues romantic or otherwise, its romantic issues being not necessarily restricted to a change back to the original order; though, this admissible instance appears to have been the only romance formerly recognized by novelists as possible in the case. Whether the following production be a picture of other possibilities or not, its incidents may be taken to be fairly well supported by evidence every day forthcoming in most counties. (*Laodicean* 380)

Hardy is telling his readers that stories about “Country manors and mansions” do not have to be merely about “the romantic issues” of lords and ladies and days gone by; they are also the setting for stories about modernity and rural, urban and even suburban communities. Hardy is describing the process by which the incursion of human industry and technology breaks up a fantasized landscape but creates the possibilities for the regional communities to engage in a cultural work of historical retrieval and separation. In other words, the region is a space for historical romance and for contemporary realism. Hardy’s regional novels present landscapes in which human labor and histories of class and physical violence are restored textually. Hardy’s novel showed to a huge national readership the aesthetic, atavistic, and backward-looking consequences of a regional community shaped by overly identifying with their historic landscapes. This critique of the dehistoricization of regional histories is, Hardy argues, the specific cultural responsibility of modern regional communities and the middle-class regional author.

II. RESTORATION, PRESERVATION: HARDY AND PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECTURE

A Laodicean was published in the same year that Hardy joined the recently founded Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. The coincidence was too much for one reviewer of the novel, who, even though writing for the *Architect and Building News*, thought that the author's architectural interests take him too far from creating any narrative interest in the novel: *A Laodicean* "finds Hardy still trailing his professional past; the hero is an architect, the second villain! is an architect, there is a competition and stolen plans and a client heroine" (qtd. in Beatty 7). *A Laodicean* was Hardy's most sustained fictional account of his architectural career, which had begun in 1856 when he was apprenticed to John Hicks, an architect in Dorset, and his protests against church restoration are rooted in the work he undertook during this time. In his autobiography, written through Florence's narrative voice, Hardy tells how the restoration movement was in "in full cry in Dorsetshire and the neighboring counties" when he began his career (E. Hardy 40). Hardy writes, "[m]uch beautiful ancient Gothic, as well as Jacobean and Georgian work, he was passively instrumental in destroying or in altering beyond identification; a matter for his deep regret in later years" (E. Hardy 40). Hardy worked with Hicks for six years before he left for London in 1862, where his experiences with restoration helped him secure a job. His connections in Dorset introduced him to the London architect Arthur Blomfield, who needed a "young Gothic draughtsman who could restore and design churches and rectory-houses" (E. Hardy 48). Hardy started work in Blomfield's drawing-office in May 1862 and the two struck up a relationship which lasted until Blomfield's death in 1899. Blomfield's office was a busy one and Hardy

seemed a devoted student of architecture there. He won two architectural prizes, a RIBA Silver Medal and an award from the Architectural Association, both in 1863.¹³ However, in 1867, Hardy was in poor health and decided to return to Dorset and to his former employer Hicks. Hicks died in 1869 and his practice was taken over by another restoration enthusiast, G.R. Crickmay. By April 1869, Hardy was assisting in restorations throughout Dorset and the southwest. It was while doing this work that Hardy traveled to Cornwall to survey and prepared a restoration plan for St. Juliot Church, part of a small, isolated parish in northeast Cornwall. Hardy worked on the project for two years and while there, he met his first wife, Emma Lavinia Gifford, who was the sister-in-law of the Rector of the parish. Following the St. Juliot restoration, much of Hardy's work involved school design for the London School Board and residential work.

Hardy gave up his architecture practice in 1873, following the publication of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, but he remained engaged with the profession through his writing and social relationships. Although architects and the subject of building appear repeatedly in his novels (with *A Laodicean* offering the most sustained treatment), Hardy mostly maintained a connection to the profession through his involvement with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, which he joined in 1881. The publisher Charles Kegan Paul was largely responsible for introducing Hardy to the organization; Paul had published two of Hardy's short stories in his periodical, the *New Quarterly Magazine*,

¹³ During his work with Blomfield, Hardy continued to write poetry and sent his verses to several journals, but never succeeded in publishing any. However, his prose sketch 'How I Built Myself a House' was published in *Chamber's Journal* in 1865 (Beatty 4).

and was interested in promoting his work; in his own *Memories*, Paul wrote that “living as I did in Dorsetshire, I was able perhaps to understand how absolutely true to life are the pictures in Hardy’s early books (qtd. in Beatty 48). Paul was originally from “Outer Wessex” (Ilminster, Somerset) and had become vicar of an Eton living at Sturminster Marshall, Dorset, in 1862. Paul, as a vicar and member of his community, was concerned with the neglect and decay of the churches themselves, but also with how restorations impacted the atmosphere within the church. It was Paul who encouraged Hardy to join SPAB, soon after the society was founded in 1877 (Howsam). In the 1870s and 1880s, Hardy was one of many authors in Dorset raising the stature of the region in the national consciousness; other popular ‘Wessex’ novelists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century’s, apart from Hardy and Paul, were John Cowper Powys, T. F. Powys, Richard Jefferies, W.H. Hudson, and William Barnes.¹⁴ Together, these authors were interested in Dorset’s local folklore, hand craft, and culture not merely for their beauty or novelty but for their ability to unlock the history of the district and reveal the synthesis of indigenous and imported traditions that formed its distinctive character. It seemed a natural next step for Hardy to join SPAB, a society committed to protecting the distinctive material history and churches in regions, like Dorset, across England (Beatty 7).

SPAB and the anti-restoration movement are generally thought to owe their existence to John Ruskin, who saw the preservation of memory in the preservation of

¹⁴Barnes was a close friend of Hardy’s; his *Glossary of the Dorset Dialect with a Grammar of Its Word Shapening and Wording* was published to great acclaim in 1886. See B. P. Birch, “Wessex, Hardy and the Nature Novelists.”

buildings.¹⁵ “We may live without [architecture],” Ruskin wrote in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), “worship without her, but we cannot remember without her” (Ruskin 17). For Ruskin, “scraping” historical buildings to “restore” them destroyed their most essential quality, the traces of touches by humans of the past. His ethos behind architectural preservation provided the impetus behind the establishment of the “Anti-Scrape Society,” SPAB, founded to save historical buildings from “scraping,” “restoration,” and commercialization. Key founders were the writer and designer William Morris and the architect Philip Webb, whose politics were less theoretical and more concrete than those of Ruskin. In the Society’s founding manifesto from 1877, though, Morris claimed that the Society desired “only to stave off decay by daily care, to prop up a perilous wall or mend a leaky roof by such means as are obviously meant for support or covering, and otherwise to resist all tampering with either fabric or ornament of the building as it stands” (Morris, “SPAB Manifesto”). Morris goes on to describe restoration as a subjective act of removal and exhibition; he argues that it is a practice that attests to both an ignorance of history and the nineteenth century’s manic attempt to find a style of its own:

From this lack and this gain arose in men’s mind the strange idea of the Restoration of ancient buildings; and a strange and most fatal idea, which by its very name implies that it is possible to strip from a building this, that, and the other part of history—of its life that is—and then to stay the hand at some arbitrary point, and leave it still historical, living, and even as it once was. (Morris, “SPAB Manifesto”)

¹⁵ Ironically, by way of misreading, the pro-restoration movement also owes credit to Ruskin. To see Ruskin’s work in a larger European and chronological context, see Miles Glendinning, “The Conservation Movement: A Cult of the Modern Age.”

Here, restoration was not simply removing and replacing a cornice, shifting the coordinates of the nave, or repairing a bell tower. It was rather an arbitrary pillaging of history—what Morris described in a letter as an “act of barbarism” (Morris, “Letter to the Athenaeum”). Restoration not only “recklessly” erases “some of its most interesting material figures” of a building, but, also obliterates its “living spirit” (Morris, “SPAB Manifesto”). Morris’s writing for the SPAB indicates his affinities with a Ruskinian belief in what is essentially a form of architectural animism: buildings. For Ruskin, for Morris, and for Hardy, were alive, actively influencing history and the present.

Morris, with the backing of SPAB, wanted to turn the national interest about architecture and materiality from restoration toward what we now would call conservation. They realized their best chance for success was to appeal beyond narrow architectural interests, asking if architects traded in the obliteration of the past rather than its preservation, who should look after the nation’s heritage? The answer, to Morris, was clear: persons with no professional interest in buildings, but with a historical investment and interest in regional and local history. Conservationists, or “guardians” as Morris called them, needed “time, money and comfort” to spend in defense of ancient monuments; in other words, they should be members of the upper and middle classes (Morris, “SPAB Manifesto”).¹⁶

Hardy agreed with this view, but his work for SPAB was distinct from that of Morris and Webb, who often focused their attention on projects in which political and

¹⁶ For a further discussion of Morris’s politics and the founding of SPAB, see Christopher Miele, “A Small Knot of Cultivated People”: William Morris and Ideologies of Protection.”

labor issues were involved in preservation. Rather, Hardy's sense that his professional past could still be put to use long motivated his involvement with SPAB, where, in addition to writing letters and essays, he also volunteered to supervise restorations so as to ensure that they were undertaken with care. Both in the projects he became a part of and in his writings on behalf of SPAB, Hardy was attentive to the personal and local associations that architecture occasions. In his 1906 essay "Memories of Church Restoration," Hardy spells out the motivation behind his interest in architecture and architectural preservation. Although informed by a concern for the aesthetic consequences of restoration, Hardy cared more about the human toll restoration exacted: "the human interest in an edifice ranks before its architectural interest, however great the latter may be" ("Memories 74). In "Memories of Church Restoration," Hardy insisted that restoration was an act of violence against history itself.¹⁷

"Memories of Church Restoration" is both an architectural exposition on restoration and "melancholy reflection" on the "active destruction" of medieval buildings that had plagued England and in which Hardy played his own active part ("Memories" 73). In the essay, Hardy positions himself as both witness and participant, and the work moves between contrition, technical discussions, and fictional scenes designed to illustrate what emerges in the text as the irrevocable harm restoration inflicted on architecture, history, and space. Hardy begins by noting the limitations that congregants and church officials faced when their buildings begin to decay. Working with a historical

¹⁷ The essay was read at the General meeting of SPAB on July 20, 1906; Hardy was not in attendance. It was later reprinted in *Cornhill* in August of 1906.

building, be it for restoration or something else, without “hurting its character” is, he notes, no “easy matter” and yet Hardy offers few solutions to the dilemma posed by restoration (“Memories” 73). Apart from shrouding a “ruinous” church in “a crystal palace,” what, he wonders, can one do to protect it and preserve its character as a place of worship? “Even a parish composed of opulent members of this Society,” he notes, “would be staggered by such an undertaking” (“Memories” 73). What can be done?

No: all that can be done is the nature of compromiseAll I am able to do is to look back in a contrite spirit on my own brief experience as a church-restorer, and, by recalling instances of the drastic treatment we then dealt out with light hearts to the unlucky fanes that fell into our hands, possibly help to prevent its repetition on the few yet left untouched. (“Memories” 73)

For Hardy, writing this essay is a way to exorcise his past and put his past sins in service of the present. As an author and as a famous personality in the region, Hardy sees himself as a prominent reformed penitent who can speak honestly about the destructive acts against his community and his environment that restoration occasioned. While he crafted and raised the stature of Wessex in his fiction, his “Memories” suggest, he demolished and flattened out the distinctive character of Dorset in his architectural practices. Hardy protests against restoration, then, from the perspective of both a practitioner and a witness to its effects. He describes a scene he witnessed “less than five years ago” when two brothers, drawn home for the funeral of their father, became engaged in a heated argument over the location of the family pew. Unable to find it, an argument ensues between the two, until “one of the pair of natives remembered that a report of such a restoration had reached his ears afar,” which had led to the removal of the pew, along with the wholesale rearrangement of the church’s interior (“Memories” 74). Called home to mourn, the brothers instead engaged in a bitter argument caused by

what, to Hardy and the “natives,” is a needless restoration that discarded the past, and the possibility that personal and communal history could inhere in even the most basic of material remains, like a family’s pew. “To many of us, the human interest in an edifice ranks before its architectural interest, however great the latter may be,” Hardy writes; the “heavy mental price for the clear nave and aisles” is too high (“Memories” 74). It is not the archive, but its neglect or commercialization that is the issue. What restorers saw as the “troublesome refuse from the Ages”—the lead of the roofs, the oak of the pews, pulpit, and altar-rails and the heavy brass chandeliers pulled from the ceiling—was in fact an repository of place and history that, when left lying in discarded piles and sold by piece to line the restorer’s pocket, did irreparable injury to the community (“Memories” 76).

Hardy brings up, almost expectedly, the Gothic as a rich source of history and handcraft and praises, as had Ruskin before him, the “indefinable quality” of a building’s deviations from exact geometry, including the curves struck by the hands of medieval workers which “never re-appear in the copy, especially in the vast majority of cases where no such nice approximation is attempted” (“Memories” 76). Echoing issues he raised in *A Laodicean*, Hardy wrote a letter to a local council in 1890 protesting a plan to demolish Stratton Church in Dorset because “[i]rregularity is the genius of Gothic architecture, & it is an act of sacrilege to obliterate an arrangement of the old builders, until at least we know what their reasons were for adopting it” (qtd. in Beatty, 14). This appreciation for the irregular, which Hardy continued from novel to letter to essay, was based not on protecting the aesthetic qualities of architecture but on what he calls the “spiritual” grounds of the anti- restoration movement:

The protection of an ancient edifice against renewal in fresh materials is, in fact, even more of a social—I may say a humane—duty than an aesthetic one. It is the preservation of memory, history, fellowships, fraternities. Life, after all, is more than art, and that which appealed to us in the (maybe) clumsy outlines of some structure which had been looked at and entered by a dozen generations of ancestors outweighs the more subtle recognition, if any, of architectural qualities. (“Memories” 76)

Hardy returns to the image of the two quarrelling brothers to remind readers of the human toll of church restoration. “Preservation” becomes, in his account, the antithesis of restoration. Places can reawaken memory, and, in Hardy’s writing, such memories become a corporeal process that depends upon physical markers—upon a place itself. In “Memories,” architecture becomes a bulwark against the siege of progress and the erasure of history. Decay, restoration, renaming, and remaking seem inevitable. But all is not lost: “the bulk of the work of preservation lies in organizing resistance,” Hardy commands, “to the enthusiasm for newness” (“Memories” 77).

III. REGIONALIZING PRESERVATION

The support for Hardy and SPAB had grown steadily throughout the 1880s and 1890s. John Ranlett has shown how, in the second half of the nineteenth century, an “impressive array of voluntary organizations dedicated to advancing . . . the related and overlapping interest of preservation, public access, and conservation” were founded (Ranlett 222). Though, like SPAB, many of these organizations sought to have a national

presence,¹⁸ a majority of these societies were purely local in membership and purpose. The *raison d'être* is clear in the names of these organizations: The Manchester Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths; the Leeds Smoke Control Sanitary Aid Society; the Keswick District Footpath Association. Historical preservation and, in particular, the preservation of vernacular buildings and crafts represented a common response to urban growth and technological progress. At the same time, these types of voluntary organizational enabled preservation societies to express regional difference while comparing similar traditions. The most famous society, because of its later association with Beatrix Potter, was the Lake District Defense Society, established in 1883 to prevent urban growth, particularly that brought in via the extension of the railway, from disturbing the beauty of that region, famous for both its beauty and associations with England's literary history. James Bryce drew a direct, and incredibly prescient, line from architectural preservation to environmental to in his address to the Selborne Society in 1900:

He thought it was very desirable that those Societies which aimed at the preservation of Nature should be linked in broad sympathy with those which had for their object the care of historic monuments. Their aims were mainly identical—the retention for posterity of the beautiful *native* spots and splendid monuments of their ancestors. The connection to natural history with political history was a very close one. (“Annual Meeting” 108, emphasis added)

¹⁸ The number of organizations founded in mid- and late-Victorian England is truly staggering, and far too numerous to list here. An idea of their interests can be noted by naming just a few of the most prominent organizations: the English Society, founded to preserve ancient foot and bridle paths, the Commons Preservation Society, founded in 1865 to save common lands from enclosure, the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, and the Selborne Society, founded to preserve natural habitats for native wildlife and plant life. See Ranlett.

Indeed, for Bryce and his fellow Victorian environmentalists, one of the primary aims of conservation was to establish a clear connection among England's "native" historical monuments, its areas of "native" natural beauty, and to its national political destiny. A key way that this was achieved was through the encouragement of a notion of Englishness at home and in the empire that rested on emotional attachments to England's political, social, and religious traditions in geographically specific historical environments and English literature. As the development of the Lake District Defense Fund suggests, England's regional environments played a crucial role in this process. These late Victorian preservation organizations helped to bring places of local and regional importance to the heart of conversations about the purpose of English heritage.

The lack of governmental support for environmental and architectural preservation provided the motivating factor behind the establishment of many of these organizations, key among them the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty. The Trust was established, first by a provisional council in 1893 and then formally in 1895, because a landowner in Deptford, in southeast England, desired to "give to the public" some land and a "curious old building," but was unable to do so because of the lack of legal provisions for such public ownership (qtd. in D. Hunter 14). The idea behind the Trust—to protect "Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty"—was not new, but the solution the original council came up with was: they would form a corporate company in order to buy "properties to which common rights are attached . . . with a view to the protection of the public interest in the open spaces of the country" (R. Hunter 12, 16). The original council members were Sir Robert Hunter, the legal counsel to the Post Office and Commons Preservations Society, Octavia Hill, a prominent

housing reformer based in London, and Harwicke Rawnsley, a clergyman who had worked to preserve lands in the Lake District—all of whom were also members of SPAB. The Trust, though, took preservation beyond mere conservation as Morris had promoted it in his Manifesto.

SPAB and the early National Trust worked closely together; indeed, it is because of the association with SPAB that many historians of the Trust dismiss the organization's early acquisitions as antiquarian and vernacular.¹⁹ More to the point, many historians of the Trust elide the organization's early acquisitions because of the imperialist and nationalist reasons motivating the early National Trust to purchase these sites. As Melanie Hall points out, "the National Trust's conscious use of architecture as historical evidence for its vision of English life and social order" (Hall 346). Properties acquired in the Trust's early days include a medieval clergy houses in Sussex, a court house in Buckinghamshire, a guild hall in Wiltshire, ruins of a manor house in Cornwall thought to have been King Arthur's Castle, and Samuel Coleridge's home in Somerset.²⁰ Taken together, these vernacular buildings represent major aspects of England's political, literary, mythic, and pre-industrial culture. It is the preservation of these types of places that pushed the Trust from a small membership of 250 in 1896 to a membership of over 2 million, "the most important and successful voluntary society in modern Britain," as David Cannadine notes (Cannadine 11).

¹⁹ See a complete history of the National Trust, see John Gaze, *Figures in a Landscape*.

²⁰ Alfriston Clergy House, a thatched parish priest's house on the property, built around 1350 and later enlarged, in East Sussex was the first house to be acquired by the National Trust, in 1896 for £10.

As opposed to SPAB and other regional organizations, then, the Trust worked on a national scale and saw itself as representing England's national and imperial interests. The executive council noted in 1896 that "England, without the places of historic interest or natural beauty that are constantly being threatened, would be a poorer country and less likely to attract and hold the affections of her sons who, far away, are colonizing the waste places of the earth" (qtd. in Hall 352). Speaking to the Trust's Council in 1900 before embarking on a fund-raising trip to America, Charles Robert Ashbee spelled out "The Aims and Work of the Trust":

The Trust appeals for its support not only to all lovers of their country, but also to those who, by race or language are brought up in English traditions, or to whom the historic associations of England are dear. It is hoped the work of the Trust will find support among the English-speaking people throughout the whole world; that the many who look to England as the parent of their own institutions will take the opportunity of helping to preserve her many charms for the enjoyment of the entire race. (qtd. in Hall 345)

The Trust, today, has moved well past appeals to empire and race in order to establish itself. Yet in its early days these were key aspects of its motivation in preservation. The Trust's early activities were supported by a range of upper and middle class professionals who, together, helped bolster the prestige and renown of England's regional landmarks to a national and international audience—as places of memory and history.²¹

²¹ Lefaivre and Tzonis argue that the commercialization and preservation of regional environments by such a group as the National Trust was part of a larger international movement at the fin-de-siècle and early twentieth century: World Fairs spread around the world with approximately the same program, advancing globalization while promoting regional commercial products with superficial cultural pretensions. Occasionally, not only the displayed products but also the buildings themselves were expressions of the particularities of regional architecture, occasionally informative about local building techniques but mostly theatrical-like as-if settings of the *genius commercialii*, marketing regional artifacts of the regions" (Lefaivre and Tzonis 104).

IV. BACK TO THE FUTURE OF WESSEX

The work of preservationists, then, linked regional spaces to England's political and environmental interests, which leads this chapter back, in this history of Victorian regionalism in the late nineteenth century, to recreation and to the West Country. Thus far, we have seen two sides of Hardy's regionalism, the novelistic and the architectural, in which roles he variously advocates for his region to build itself apart from its history and, at the same time, helps to preserve that history for the region. This final section of the chapter will turn to another, perhaps more familiar, side of Hardy's work: his role in "fixing" the identity of Wessex. Wessex, in Hardy's novels, in England's national imagination, and in the sort of literature produced by the Trust about Hardy's home, is known by a series of attributes—rustic, rural, and the home of scrumpy cider—but Wessex is also a physical place on the map of England. It has been so since 1878, when Hardy finished *The Return of the Native* and wrote to his publishers with an idea:

I enclose for your inspection a Sketch of the supposed scene in which the "Return of the Native" is laid—copied from the one I used in writing the Story—& my suggestion is that we place an engraving of it as frontispiece to the first volume. Unity of place is so seldom preserved in novels that a map of the scene of action is as a rule impracticable: but since the present story affords an opportunity of doing so I am of opinion that it would be a desirable novelty, likely to increase a reader's interest. I may add that a critic once remarked to me that nothing could give such reality to a tale as a map of this sort: & I myself have often felt the same thing. (Hardy, *Collected Letters* 1:61).²²

²² The map was used, per Hardy's suggestion, as the frontispiece for the novel's first edition (published by Smith, Elder & Co).

None of Hardy's novels were published with a physical map until 1895, when each of the eighteen volumes of Hardy's novels began with a map of Wessex as part of the complete edition of his works issued by Osgood, McIlvaine. Along with an endpaper illustration of Hardy's signature, the maps in the novels elide differences between landmarks and commonplaces, real and fictional topographies of the region. In this map Hardy's novels are joined together, announcing their geographies as intersecting and intertwined with one another, and locating themselves in Wessex, England.

There are several reasons Hardy decided to partner with the firm of Osgood, McIlvaine. Hardy had supervised editions of his novels throughout his career, eager, presumably, for both the financial gains and for the opportunity for revision that each new edition offered. Although the Wessex edition was the first collected reissue of his works, by the time Hardy undertook the project he had already revised some of his novels as many as five times. Especially following the critical outrage about and subsequent sales of *Tess*, Hardy was making a healthy living from writing; timed to appear on the heels of *Tess* and at the height of his popularity, the Wessex Novels promised a substantial financial return. Although they acknowledge the financial incentives for the project, many critics of Hardy suggest that it was the changing character of Hardy's beloved Dorset that most motivated the Wessex edition. Michael Millgate suggests that the project offered Hardy the opportunity to shore up what he had always intended his novelistic project to be—a portrait and history of the lives and habits of the Dorsetshire region. According to Millgate, although Hardy was aware of the commercial incentives behind the project, first and foremost he found that it “answered magnificently to his ambitions as a regional historian, his desire to record as faithfully as possible the details

of a vanishing way of life” (Millgate 333). Gatrell contends that the edition was “the single most important publishing event in Hardy’s career as a writer.” He argues that Osgood, Mcilvaine gave Hardy “the opportunity to revise all his fiction from a common standpoint, the standpoint of Thomas Hardy, delineator of Wessex” (Gatrell, *Hardy* 118).

Gatrell also suggests that the Dorset of Hardy’s early years had effectively disappeared by the 1890s; thus, while early in his career he was trying to “protect” the region from interlopers, by the end of the century he felt that “the culture of his youth had been irreversibly transformed by Victorian technological and social change” (Gatrell, “Wessex” 28). Although Gatrell seems convinced of the authenticity of Hardy’s agrarian past, Raymond Williams contends that “Hardy was born into a changing and struggling rural society, rather than the timeless backwater to which he is so often deported” (Williams 197). Hardy was “a man playing the countryman novelist” and part of this play-acting was the elaborate withholding and advancing of Wessex that Hardy performed throughout his career (Williams 205). John Barrell suggests that Hardy never had any intention of revealing Wessex to his readers, for no matter how rich the complexity of Wessex’s cartography is, readers will always exist outside of it in time and place and Wessex will always exist, primarily, as an imaginative place (Barrell 113). Critical discussions of the Wessex revisions tend to focus on Hardy’s motivations—variously understood as financial, antiquarian, or elegiac. Hardy’s own descriptions of the project focus instead on his task as little more than an unpleasant duty.

In all his letters from 1895 Hardy describes the “drudgery” of his revisions: “I am getting quite worn out with the unpleasant work of reading over the proofs of my old novels, the drudgery of hunting after printers’ errors being anything but exhilarating”;

“and so [I] have more time for my clerical drudgery—for what I am doing is hardly literary work”; “I am chained here, to the drudgery of misplaced commas and new spellings of my dry old words” (Hardy, *Collected Letters* 2:80, 84, 85). The task must have felt like a chore in many ways, for, as he reported to Douglas in October of 1895, Hardy was “making no alterations in the old stories, beyond the correction of a name, or a distance, here and there” (Hardy, *Collected Letters* 2:91). Although Hardy suggests that he was only “correcting” a name or a distance, the task of the Wessex Edition was nothing short of a wholesale standardization of the map of Wessex—a meticulous inventory of place names, distances, and the relations between the various parts of an expansive fictional geography that Hardy had created almost by accident from his earliest novels onward.²³

Hardy’s revised and expanded prefaces to all the novels included in this edition, of which *A Laodicean* was one, in order to locate his readers, along with the novels, firmly within Wessex’s topography. In the “General Preface” to yet another version of his novels, the 1912 Wessex Edition, Hardy famously wrote that the “appellation which I had

²³ The kind of retrospective form of revision that Hardy performed with the Wessex editions has an analogue in the textual revisions he often undertook as his novels moved from periodical to single-volume publication. When publishing in periodicals, especially in his final years of novel writing, Hardy had to make significant changes to plot lines and character descriptions in order to meet the tastes (and moral standards) of his editors. He would then reverse these changes when the novels were published independently. However, as Norman Page notes, by the time Hardy wrote *Jude*, and set to shift it back for volume publication, he felt the task to be increasingly tedious and frustrating. In order to make Jude “suitable for a family magazine” (as Macmillan’s editor phrased it to Hardy), Hardy shifted the focus of the novel towards Jude’s quest for an education and away from the issue of marriage. He also drastically modified Jude’s relationship with Sue and Arabella. As Page writes, when it came time to revise it for volume publication, “the process of restoration was duly performed . . . By this time [Hardy] had acquired a considerable measure of skill in damaging the fabric of his original version of a novel in such a way that, once the hazards of serial publication had been successfully negotiated, the damage could be repaired with relative ease; he noted in his diary, however, that ‘on account of the labor of altering *Jude the Obscure* to suit the magazine, and then having to alter it back, I have lost energy for revising and improving the original as I meant to’” (Page 17).

thought to reserve to the horizons and landscapes of a partly-real, partly dream-country, has become more and more popular as a practical provincial definition; and the dream-country has, by degrees, solidified into a utilitarian region” (Hardy, “Preface” 5). Hardy’s tone is coy, suggesting that Wessex had always been, for him, a vague geographical location and fictional landscape on which to paint, which had somehow “solidified” into a mappable location. Hardy sidesteps the question of how this solidification occurred; rather, he urges his readers to forget the utilitarian aspect of the increasingly “real” Wessex and, instead, encourages them to refuse to believe that Wessex is anything but a “dream-country.”

In the next moment, though, Hardy encourages readers to go seek out the real: he clarifies the location of the village of Weatherbury, a village in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and provides a landmark that knits his fictional landscape more fully to Dorset: “the church remains, by great good fortune, unrestored and intact” (Hardy, “Preface” 5). This pattern of withholding Wessex and laying its topography bare characterizes many of Hardy’s prefaces; the revised preface to *A Laodicean*, in which Hardy gives directions for the “satisfaction of the investigating topographer” is one of many examples. In the postscript to *The Return of the Native* written in 1878, Hardy contends that Egdon Heath is a “general name” for “heath of various real names” (Hardy, “Preface” 5). In 1912, though, Hardy numbers himself among his readers who want to imagine Egdon Heath as a real location: “[i]t is pleasant to dream that some spot in the extensive tract whose south-western quarter is here described, may be the heath of that traditionary King of

Wessex—Lear” (Hardy, “Preface” 5).²⁴ He incorporates his own version of Wessex into a long and formidable literary history, with specific geographical coordinates, and admits to the pleasures of “searching for scenery” that might exist only in the pages of story.

By 1912 Hardy seems to have given up his attempts to dissuade the reader from directly equating the historical Wessex of his novel with modern Dorset, and from looking to his books as tour guides to the region. In an apparent reversal of his early treatments of Wessex as an imaginative region, Hardy insists upon the materiality of his fictional settings’ referents—and then reverses himself again in the same moment: “It is also advisable to state here, in response to inquiries from readers interested in landscape, prehistoric antiquities, and especially old English architecture, that the description of these backgrounds has been done from the real—that is to say, has something real for its basis, however illusively treated” (Hardy, *Far* 495). He then offers an extensive list of place names, pinning down even more emphatically a geographical system that was at first schematic, happenstance and as much (so he claimed) an outgrowth of his imagination as the result of the map of Dorset and its surroundings. The map of 1895 has, by 1912, given way to an even more explicit geography. Now both decipherable through his novels and visible on the map, Wessex is knowable, mappable, and open for business.

Readers and tourists see in Hardy’s map a confirmation of the precision of his novels’ geography and a verification of what many had already presumed were the real

²⁴ In the preface to *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Hardy relates how he came to the term Wessex: “The series of novels I projected being mainly of the kind called local, they seemed to require a territorial definition of some sort to lend unity to their scene. Finding that the area of a single county did not afford a canvas large enough for this purpose and that there were objections to an invented name, I disinterred the old one” (Hardy, *Far* 5).

equivalents of a hazy fictional landscape. Maps, according to Edward Tufte, are visual representations of evidence and statistical information; they are vehicles that same abstraction through visual images (Tufte 14). Cartography is a form of narration that both writes and reveals the story of a space. Recent work in critical geography has called attention to the many ways in which the supposed objectivity of a map obscures an embedded history of power struggles, cultural agendas and efforts to shape space in various ways.²⁵ Yet many still view a map if not as a disinterested instrument, then as one that strives towards some form of mimesis. Paradoxically, this is especially true of literary maps, which many readers expect to anchor them and help navigate a novelistic landscape and its “real” geographical referents.²⁶ Such readers rely on a map to coordinate spatial relations, to embody the deictic “here” by gesturing in the syntax of cartography to various routes, landmarks and landforms through which one might orient the experience of a given place. Of course a map is also a metaphor, a figure that stands in for the real and that is constantly thwarted by changes in topography, renaming,

²⁵ See, for example, the collection of essays in Michie and Thomas, eds., *Nineteenth-Century Geographies: The Transformation of Space from the Victorian Age to the American Century*.

²⁶ For Barthes, literary representations of real places always fall short. In his essay “The Reality Effect,” Barthes argues that “[A]ny ‘view,’ is inexhaustible by discourse” (Barthes 145). A place always yields more than language itself can accommodate: inflections of space or color, certain corners or fleeting details always remain in spite of the most arduous efforts to capture and contain a place. Describing a place, Barthes claims, involves a posturing of precision: “by positing the referential as real, by pretending to follow it in a submissive fashion, realistic description avoids being reduced to fantasmatic activity” (Barthes 145). The function of literary description is to combine the aesthetic and the objective and allow the one to moderate the other. Barthes describes writing a setting as an act of make-believe: a writer pretends that the referential is real, and purports to submit to realistic description even as the description veers wildly away from the real. Wessex poses an interesting challenge to this account, as Hardy found himself chasing down the reference and submitting to it entirely by the time his revisions began. In many of Hardy’s novels and stories the sheer number of places and landmarks mentioned is part of the reason why, more often than not, place names are part of the superfluity of detail that Barthes identifies as the reality effect rather than the kind of ‘objective’ detail. In Hardy’s work, place names create the fiction of presence, and of the “real.”

remaking, and shiftings in space. A map play-acts at mimesis, is always partial, and is always on the verge of its own obsolescence. Yet, unlike a map of a London suburb, which must be redrawn once the railroad arrives, or a colonial map, which is repeatedly refigured as competing nations divide up its topography as spoils, a map of a fictional geography might seem to be immune to such shiftings.

How, though, is Hardy's mapmaking any different from previous Victorian cartographic novelists—Trollope, for example? In some ways, Hardy took literary mapping to an extreme, but, as the last chapter demonstrated, Barsetshire too emerged out of a series of novels. Trollope drew his own map while writing *Framely Parsonage*: "as I wrote [the novel] I made a map of the dear country. Throughout these stories there has been no name given to a fictitious site which does not represent to me a spot of which I know all the accessories, as though I had lived and wandered there" (Trollope 133). For Trollope, the map verified what he "had already in [his] mind" about the imaginary geography that appeared in his novels; the map emerged directly out of the hyperrealism in his novels. The southwest England landscape of Trollope's novels became associated with his fictional renamings in the nineteenth century and the region itself came to symbolize the traditional south country values Trollope's novels celebrated. Yet, Barsetshire existed, in a sense, in the same world of his upper and middle class readers. Each of the six novels effectively focuses the reader on a journey to someplace new within the region, while occasionally suggesting and referencing their intertwined topography; Barsetshire regionalism is defined by the society there.

Prior to placing his novel on the map, the vagueness of Hardy's fictional geographies allowed him to dilate or contract his landscape as his plots required and to

keep his readers' own relationship to Dorset and its fictional iterations at bay. Once he mapped Wessex, however, Hardy gave into the very "pursuit of the real" he once cautioned against. It is perhaps no surprise that Hardy described the mapping and standardization of Wessex as "drudgery," for the act represented his surrender to the demand of readers. The fact that the first published map of Wessex supervised by Hardy came out in the very same year that he turned away from novel writing and towards poetry is perhaps more than a coincidence. Hardy found in poetry an antidote to the clamoring masses of his novels' audience—for poetry.

By the 1880s what had become his sizable audience had descended on Dorset, eager to map Hardy's fictional world onto the landscape of Hardy's own life and work. A writer for the *British Quarterly Review* published an account of Hardy's novels that foregrounds the representation of Wessex/Dorset as the crux of Hardy's importance:

That Mr. Hardy has taken his place in the true literature of England is to us beyond question. For his sake and for their own we trust the large public will recognize the fact, and steep themselves in the fresh healthy air of Dorset, and come into contact with the kindly folks who dwell there, through these pages, and then test their truth, as they can, in summer visits to the wolds, hillsides, and coasts, which their "native" has described so well. ("Survey" 102)²⁷

And thus the "Hardy Industry" was born. The thickness and density of the historical landscape—mined and protected by Hardy the architect, described by Hardy the novelist and made material by Hardy the cartographer—repeatedly records the connections between place, history, and region. These connections are the crux of Hardy's legacy, to literature and to the modern tourist industry. *A Laodicean*, along Hardy's later Wessex

²⁷ See also J.M. Barrie, "Thomas Hardy: The Historian of Wessex."

novels *Jude the Obscure* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, anchors Wessex in both time and space. These three novels are obsessed with asking whether a balance can be struck between old and new and illustrating the struggle of people required to embrace progress or retreat from it. Though ambivalent feelings surround this necessity, it is unavoidable; restoration, in *A Laodicean*, is presented as one more way to evade this reality. However, against the rising tide of preservation, recreation, and imaginative remaking, Wessex emerges as a real and fixed historic landscape—with a red brick villa at its heart.

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CHAPTER ONE

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